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THE
WANDERING SCHOLAR

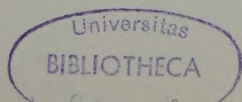
BY

DAVID G. HOGARTH

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AUTHOR'S NOTE

Two books, published, one in 1896, the other in 1910, are combined here under the title of the first. Two chapters and some paragraphs of the original *Wandering Scholar* are omitted, because they contain what is now stale and unprofitable; also the introductory chapter of *Accidents of an Antiquary's Life*, because it would not be in place in this combination. With hesitation, I retain the third chapter on the Anatolian Turk because, if it was a faithful picture of him under Abdul Hamid, it is probably not altogether unfaithful now, despite political changes. For the rest, I have made no attempt to bring the matter, archaeological or other, up to date, but have left what I wrote at the first to be judged by the standards of 1896 to 1910. My thanks are due to Mr. Murray and to Messrs. Macmillan, the respective publishers of the original books, for assent to their reissue.

D. G. H.

September 1924

TO
W. M. R.

AND MY COMPANIONS IN TRAVEL

Most young authors on the issue of a book feel disposed to apologize for its existence, and I, being no exception, cannot refrain from pleading in part excuse for that which I dedicate to you the circumstances under which these chapters were composed. They have been written bit by bit at wide intervals of time, now on a steamer's deck, now at a khan, now in a mud hut, now in camp. I can only venture to hope that their consequent defects may be balanced by a transient flavour of the East, by a little of its air and light caught here and there in a page. And perhaps you at least will be kind to them because I may recall sometimes, however imperfectly, scenes that you also saw and may not be destined to see again.

1896

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CHAPTER I

THE SCHOLAR'S CALLING

To be at once a Scholar and a Wanderer is to indulge the least congruous desires. In the same hour one gratifies the last refinement of intellectual curiosity and obeys a call from the first state of nature. For the 'wandering fever' is in a sense a temptation of original sin, heard across the ages, and the scholar finds a subtle joy in returning to the wilderness in spite of being a scholar.

Therein lies a danger to him in so far as he pursues a profession. For his is really a calling like any other, to be pursued professionally; he is an agent of science, a collector of raw material for the studies of other men. But the life of the Wanderer, a law to himself, conduces to a certain Bohemian habit of mind, apt, when concerned with antiquity, to issue in the easy specialism of the dilettante or to fall to the idle wonder of the sightseer. In either event the scholar will become that most profitless of amateurs, a picker and chooser among the quaint and curious things that have drifted down to us on the stream of time.

Let him recall a famous aphorism of Bacon—*antiquitas saeculi iuventus mundi*—and apply it thus. The relics of ancient days are all that remain to us of the conditioning circumstance of the young world's life; they pertain not to an epoch of

mysterious greatness or of 'giants that were in those days', but to the infinitely little in which our autobiography begins. They are not to be looked at with wide-eyed wonder by the modern, who is himself the roof and crown of things. The reverence due to antiquity is that paid by an adult to a child; and whenever we think of the ancient world as aged we are unconsciously under the spell of an ambiguity of our language which admits as synonym for both those epithets the same word 'old'. It is true that in certain fields of achievement—in the domain of the imitative arts, for instance—the young world attained to excellence not since surpassed; but if the whole circumstance of life be taken into account, the Hellene, with his conception of a flat world and a geocentric universe, stands as much below ourselves as the boy, apt in physical athletics, stands below the adult who no longer may be able either to leap or to run.

So regarded, the flotsam of antiquity has a function greater and more comprehensive than to gratify an aesthetic sense or stimulate imagination. The Scholar, seeking diligently and with pain for every trifling remnant, is justified of his labour; and the world, too, is justified which sends him out again and sets a value on his research. After all, in few minds do ancient monuments really gratify an aesthetic sense, or stimulate imagination. How many, that see it, are convinced by the Parthenon? and who has not had some dismal hour of disillusion when, with all things favouring, he felt nevertheless

no mysterious thrill? In the Dionysiac Theatre, looking over that storied balustrade to the blue Saronic sea—what a moment for a Scholar! Sit down on a marble bench, and, shutting out the external world, open your inward eyes on the scene at the Dionysia—tier on tier of happy Athenians, an orchestra gay with grotesque batrachians, and Charon coaching Dionysus in a boat on the stage. Do you catch the rustle of the long-robed audience and their quick response to Aristophanes? No, emphatically no, you do not; you are conscious only of the sun on your back and commingling scents in your nose. Faint and far come street cries and the raucous echo of a Teutonic voice on the Acropolis above. Imagination has condemned you to downright dismal failure, and Candour calls you to get up and go away.

This trade of the Wandering Scholar is a thing of yesterday. Islam was long all powerful to exclude from the Levant, and European discovery followed the sun till it had completed the circle of the world. The rediscovery of the nearer east was due to Louis XIV. Before his time the dark continent of hither Asia had been penetrated only by a handful of pilgrims, political envoys and adventurers, who observed little and recorded less: such, for example, as Bertrandon de la Brocquière, who on his way back from Palestine in 1433 limited his interest to the court ceremonial of the Grand Karaman; or the English sailor, Newbery, noting in 1578 only

the price of 'grograms' in the markets between Erzerum and Brusa; or Tavernier, who excludes from his itineraries, together with dates and distances, all observations of any human interest whatever. Moslems, Ibn Batuta and Evliya Effendi, lifted the curtain where a holy place of Islam had succeeded to a shrine of the Infidel; but only one Christian, Busbequius, who copied a few lines of the great Ancyran inscription on his way to Amasia, enlightened the ignorance of the West on the ancient wonders of the East. It was the gem-collectors of the *Grand Monarque*, Spon, Tournefort, Paul Lucas and Otter, commissioned to bring back curiosities of antiquity or gobbets of information, who were the real pioneers. They broke the way for Pococke and Chandler and Leake and Texier, for polite societies like the English Dilettanti, and for governments like the Napoleonic, conducted in the grand style, under whose patronage archaeological wandering became a professional calling.

As a calling, it demands in practice much more than a knowledge of antiquities and the methods of recording them. If the Scholar wanders into inland Asia he is bound to play the explorer first and the scholar second; for the Ottoman Empire has been shut against the West so long and so closely that in many parts he will find himself a pioneer breaking new ground for every science. With so many stepping stones to set in the stream of ignorance, the Scholar had best take not too pro-

fessional a view of his ostensible calling. Maps and political reports, customs and types and folk-lore, eggs and bulbs and butterflies and rocks—all these will fill his day with amateur occupations for which his professional interest is probably not the worse. After all, he is but practising catholicity, and catholicity will serve him even within the limits of Archaeology. The 'Remains of Distant Times' are various enough, and the Wandering Scholar may neglect a coin as little as a city.

Yes, a city. That red-letter day which Hamilton marked when he found Isaura, crumbling on its lonely mountain, has come once at least to most explorers of Anatolia—a day on which one breaks into some hidden hollow of the hills and sees grey among the lentisks the stones of a dead town. Such fairy-cities are those nameless pirate-towns that were built on the Cilician slopes in the first two centuries before the Christian era. Water, no longer guided by man through long ducts, has failed on the high lands, and the region remains as it was left a thousand years ago, a vast Pompeii, where no man has rebuilt or destroyed. In its capital, Olba, citadel, walls, streets and roads are choked with brushwood. A triple arch leads into the Forum; on the left the façade of a Temple of Fortune stands in the brake, and in front rise the fluted columns of the Olbian Zeus, whose priests were kings. Passing a ruined portico, the explorer lights suddenly on a theatre lined with tangled vegetation sprouting from every crevice in audi-

torium and scene. But nothing in the city is more wonderful than the road leading from it to the coast. Mile after mile its embanked pavement runs over the naked rocks; mile after mile stones, fallen or standing, inscribed with the titles of Roman Emperors, record your progress. Here you pass a group of tombs, there clatter through an ancient village, and at last wind down sweeping curves to the sea, past towers and tombs rising white out of the scrub; and nowhere in the towers or the villages, on the road or in the city is there a human thing except the wandering shepherds.

These dead cities, however, should imply to the Wandering Scholar more than a stimulus to those 'lively and pleasing reflections' with which Sir John Vanbrugh credited the 'polite part of mankind'. Rather they involve long labour with tape-line and camera in blistering heat, and weary hours of discouragement, spent over inscribed stones turned upside down, black with exposure and riddled with worm-holes, such as the hundred sarcophagi that line the *Sacra Via* of Hierapolis. Would that arm-chair critics of published inscriptions had had to read *in situ* certain stones that I recall—to copy, for example, by the light of a tiny lamp, with one's head down in a square hole cut in a mosque floor, a stone built into the foundations, while round about hangs a cloud of odorous humanity, hardly bribed to allow this sacrilegious thing to be done at all. You might be less hard in the future,

O irresponsible reviewer, on a poor Wanderer who now and again reads A for A, or C for O.

The happiest hunting-ground of the exploring Scholar is a graveyard. The peasants love to erect above their dead ancient *stelae* and milestones, partly because they find these shaped ready to their hands; partly because they have a vague belief that the mysterious writing will bring good luck in another life. Where milestones occur in groups of five or six, as in the Anti-Taurus on the Roman military road to the Euphrates, they are left *in situ*, and by each is laid a Turkman peasant to sleep below the stately record of an Emperor's names and titles. Happy the scholar who has only to prowl like a ghou! among such tombstones, for there he is on common ground where an insignificant *bakshish* will induce any Turk or Christian cheerfully to clear a half-buried inscription, however deeply he may have to delve in the resting-place of his nearest relative: but it is another matter altogether when the 'written stone' is in a house. The stupidity and cupidity of a man, the fears and malevolence of a woman, baffle for days, and may condemn him finally to failure. The peasant's mind moves very slowly, and he has two processes to accomplish—first, to realise that the stone, which he has seen all his life, is the one which the *giaur* wishes to see; secondly, to convince himself (and his wife or wives) that it is to his interest to show it. There is a little village called Badinlar near the Maeander, first visited in 1884 by Frenchmen, and

reported to contain no antiquities. Mr. Ramsay followed close on the Frenchmen's heels, and found half a dozen 'written stones'. Three years later he passed again that way with me, and we were rewarded with a series of inscriptions of singular interest relating to a local semi-barbarian worship of Apollo, the remains of whose temple itself we found. It might have been thought that we had exhausted that tiny hamlet, but in 1889 Mr. Ramsay, chancing to pass once more, found half a dozen stones still uncopied; and I have little doubt that the next scholar who wanders thither will not return empty-handed.

There is but one golden rule in inscription-hunting. Never believe the inevitable denial; insist, cajole, display coin of the realm till you get one, just one, 'written stone'. Never mind if you found it yourself; pay somebody all the same. Your hard work is over. After waiting an hour for the first written stone at Comana of Cappadocia in 1891, we were guided to twenty ere another hour had passed. At Sâdagh, the site of Satala, in 1894, a whole day proved blank; but on the morrow the peasants were prising up their hearthstones and scrubbing floors and walls that had never been cleaned within living memory, until, in the end, we copied five-and-twenty inscriptions. Rarely, marvellously rarely, the peasant proves exorbitant and obdurate; there is gold in his stone, and he means to have it or an equivalent from you. If you fail to buy, he will hack the inscription to pieces to get

at the treasure that he believes to be inside. So there must ensue a contest of wits. A Greek inscription of moderate length you may learn by heart while you haggle. I have never ceased to be ashamed of having helped so to cheat a Turk of the Maeander Valley who had coloured purple a valueless *stela* of Motella and fixed its price at £50. But the owner of a hieroglyphic stone can defy anything but a detective camera, as we found in 1890 at Bor.

Bor is a dirty town, three miles distant from the site of the very ancient and royal city of Tyana; whence had been brought (to be lodged, alas! in the house of a Greek virago) part of a Hittite *stela*. It bore a broken relief of a head, crowned with a kingly tiara, and a long incised inscription in the linear Hittite hieroglyphic character, of which, at that time, only one other example was known. Its existence was discovered by Mr. Ramsay in 1882, but then the owner would allow no impression to be taken, and frustrated all attempts to make a careful copy. Returning four years later, the discoverer could obtain neither permission to see it, nor even information of its whereabouts. We resolved to make another and last effort in 1890, and took up our quarters in the *khan* at Bor.

The Greek woman had found no purchaser in ten years, and was not averse now to reopen negotiations. We soon had news of the 'black stone', and the same afternoon a guide led us through narrow streets and up a closed courtyard to a barn, where

in a dark hole in the mud floor lay the treasure. Deputing a go-between to open negotiations for purchase, we took advantage of the diversion and the owner's apparent graciousness to set to work with pencil and note-book. In a moment the Greek had leapt on to the stone, spreading herself like a hen on a sitting of eggs, whilst a crowd of friends bustled to her assistance. Under such circumstances it was impossible to copy an inscription in an unknown character ; so we had no resource but to bargain. The Greek demanded five hundred liras ; we consulted and made a handsome offer of five for immediate possession. She collapsed in her son's arms, and recognizing that the ice was broken, we went away.

All the evening the go-betweens came and went. Next morning our caravan was ordered to start, and the price came down to forty liras. When the horses were yoked to the baggage-waggon, the market fell to thirty : as the waggon rumbled out before us under the *khan* gate, the figure was twenty-five ; with my foot in the stirrup I was asked for twenty-two, and riding out for twenty. Doubtless we could have got the stone for less, but we were pressed for time, and it was worth more than twenty liras. So the bargain was struck and the stone lifted into our waggon. Needless to say, we could not hope to carry off so well-known a treasure under the very eyes of the local Governor, unless prepared to pay more in *bakshish* than in purchase, and, once we had impressions and copies,

the stone itself might as well be placed in the Imperial Museum at Stambul. Making, therefore, an ostentatious virtue of necessity, we conveyed it ten miles to Nigdeh, and lodged it there in trust for His Majesty the Sultan. The excitement was immense, and we became the observed of all the town. Strolling that night in the dark over the crowded roof of the *khan*, I heard that certain Franks had tried to escape with a stone worth 10,000 liras, but had been arrested by the police and forced to disgorge. Officials themselves deprecated such wasteful generosity ; and a Government secretary approached us privately next day with a kind suggestion that, if our difficulty related to the conveyance of the stone to the coast, he could arrange that we should be robbed of it outside the town, and for a slight consideration recover it at the port. Gratefully and regretfully we declined.

The story has a sequel, for the lower half of the same *stela* was above ground. A rumour of it reached us, and a month later I was back in Bor. But the situation had changed ; the authorities had made hue and cry for the second stone, and its owner would not reveal his identity unless I pledged myself solemnly to have no dealings with the Government in the matter. I was forced to promise, though I knew that on mountain roads we could not convey secretly anything heavy. When all was dark in the *bazar* a messenger appeared, and my companion and myself crept out of the *khan*. Feeling our way along the walls, we groped through

the deep shadow of a labyrinth of unlighted alleys ; here we stumbled over a sleeping man, there kicked up a protesting dog, but our European dress passed unnoticed in the dark, and no one followed. We seemed to have been stumbling thus for miles, when the guide halted before a window in a long blank wall. We clambered through and found the scene changed to a luxuriant garden, and the hot night air heavy with the scent of flowering shrubs. Through these we brushed to a small plot of grass beside a well, where a courteous Turk was expecting us. Bidding us be seated, he offered grapes and paid the usual compliments ; and for nearly half an hour nothing but what was indifferent was said, while we waited, oppressed by the scents and the stillness. At last the host rose silently and, producing a lantern, signed to us to follow to the opposite side of the well. We did so, and there saw shining wet in the small circle of light a black stone. It was indeed the lower half of our *stela*. The figure of a man from the neck downwards, clad in a richly embroidered robe, and shod with upturned shoes, stood out in bold relief ; and at each side of him and below his feet were Hittite symbols. The owner hardly allowed a second look before extinguishing his lantern. I offered money for leave to draw the sculpture and inscription, but he would not accept it. I was to take the dangerous thing, which robbed him of sleep, right away, or he would sink it again in the well. All means of persuasion were tried, even to threats of informing the

Government, but these availed nothing, for he knew that I was ignorant of his identity, and, as I guessed, we had not been led to the garden by any direct road. I could not undertake to smuggle the stone away ; he would listen to no other suggestion ; and, after long dispute under the stars, we took leave in sorrow rather than anger, and dropped through the window again into the dark lane.

An epigraphist's experiences are seldom so like the Arabian Nights as this. Far, far more often he must tramp about torrid, odorous villages, beset by an impudent or hostile crowd, to copy ill-cut, half-erased epitaphs of no more apparent interest than modern gravestones. Miserable little Lycaonian and Pisidian sites may yield each a hundred such—mere repetitions of one formula with varying barbaric names, and here and there an elegiac tribute of local manufacture and no conceivable merit. You must copy against time, for it is nearly sunset and you are miles from camp ; you are forced to decipher through a field-glass a stone in such villainous condition that, unless you could bring your eyes within an inch or two of the lettering, and with a knife-blade distinguish chiselling from stone-flaws, you would read little or nothing with certainty ; you have to make out by a blind man's touch, without his experience, a text built into the darkest corner of a windowless room. Worst of all, it is impossible to make the peasants distinguish between ancient and modern inscriptions, or between lettering and mouldings or mere scratches on a

rock. All are *yasili*, 'written'; and many are the weary rides up to the hill-tops and down to the valleys, that result in nothing but vexation of spirit. An Anatolian, like an Irish, peasant, if kindly disposed, tells you what you evidently wish to hear: water a day's march distant is to be found round the next corner; a plough-marked boulder is covered with 'faces of men and animals and writing'; two ruined huts become a city.

After a fortnight's inscription-hunting, a day in a town with the *antica*-dealers is a solace and a joy; for even if one knows little of coins and gems and seals, the prizes in the lottery far exceed the blanks, and each successive bargain reveals new recesses of the Oriental mind. The most profitable speculation in Anatolia lies in the field of bronze city-coinage of Roman times. You will buy only pieces in really fine condition, and may reckon, if you care to sell again, on making cent. per cent. on almost all of them. Silver money is a less certain investment; prices are proportionately higher, and the types, being less destructible, are more common in Europe. There is little to fear from forgers in the interior. An expert of Tarsus, wise in his generation, used to fabricate by the score the common *drachmas* of Alexander the Great to sell to tourists as money used by St. Paul; but evidences of his handiwork have become scarce now, and I think he must have paid his debt to nature or the law. But in the ports—above all in Smyrna—the handiwork of Greek coiners is rife, and one needs to be almost as sus-

picious as in that paradise of counterfeit, the plain of Egyptian Thebes.

Anticas are apt to occur in 'pockets'. In 1890 we travelled for more than three months, but found not a dozen small objects of value in all the villages or towns, except in Karaman alone, where every merchant in the *bazar* seemed to have his little hoard of coins; and there in two hours we bought more than fifty, two unique and very few at all common. Similarly in 1894 at Aintab there were brought to us from one source or another Hittite seals, cylinders, and scarabs of the utmost rarity, together with some thirty stone implements; whereas in all our subsequent journey to the Black Sea we did not find the tithe of that treasure. It is true that we had been helped unknowing by unlooked-for allies—the local police; for long afterwards it leaked out that all who possessed antiquities had been driven to us for the testing of a theory that we were no archaeologists but political spies; and it seems that, after all, the dark suspicion was held to be confirmed by the fact that we bought only poor, ugly stones and refused all the gems.

Where one has to deal with ignorant cunning, all ideals of candour and justice must be thrown to the winds. If you reside for months in a certain district you may offer fair prices only; as weeks pass, the peasants will come to know that you are a just Englishman, whose habit is not to bargain. But if the mere wanderer offers a fair price the odds are that the magnitude of it will cause the owner to

conclude at once that the real value of his *antica* is far greater ; and the caution of the peasant and the Oriental combined will bring about the most hopeless disinclination to sell. To combat this mood a European will need all his wits. At Bor in 1890 (after the episode of the stone) I was shown by a Turk a silver seal, supported on three lions' claws, and inscribed with a figure in Hittite dress with Hittite symbols round him. At a glance I recognized in the seal an absolutely unique thing, to be secured at all costs ; but hardly was it in my hand before its owner snatched it away and disappeared. I soon learned that he intended not to sell to me at all ; but after some hours he was persuaded to let me have another look at the curiosity, on the express understanding that it was not for sale. A crowd collected, and I remarked that the *antica* was worth two dollars. The instinct of bargain made the bystanders shout at once, ' Give half a lira ! ' I hesitated. ' One lira ! ' ' A lira and a half ! ' ' Two liras ! ' they clamoured rapturously. I made a fatuous stand at that figure. Delighted to have rushed me to near six times my price they turned on the owner of the seal. ' Give it him ! Give it him ! Two liras ! He said two dollars ! ' He parleyed a moment, and was lost ; and the only silver Hittite seal in the world is now in the Ashmolean Museum.¹

The laugh, however, is often enough on the other side. In my first *wanderjahr* I was in camp with

¹ This was in 1890. Many more are known in 1924.

Mr. Ramsay in a wretched Phrygian village far from the track of travellers. As we were striking tents in the morning a heavy-faced boy brought to my companion a handful of bronze. He sorted it rapidly on the palm of his hand, and espied a single very rare coin of Hieropolis among the Byzantine rubbish. Putting all in the boy's outstretched hand again, he offered half a dollar for the lot. Without hesitation the boy accepted, gave back the handful, took his ten piastres, and departed, while my companion chuckled and went off among the horses. Ten minutes later the boy reappeared, and, coming straight this time to me, held out another handful of bronze, in which I was astounded to see a second example of the rare Hieropolitan type. Keeping the coins in my hand I offered another half-dollar; the boy refused, but eventually accepted a dollar. Hailing my companion, I informed him that now he was not the only man possessing a coin of Hieropolis, and showed him my purchase. 'Let us compare,' said he, emptying the pocket in which his bronze jingled. He sorted the whole lot, and felt in every pocket, but no coin of Hieropolis was there; and for the rest of that day we debated two insoluble questions—who had taught the heavy-faced Phrygian which coin was rare and gave value to the whole handful? and to which buyer, now that the transaction was finished, did the coin belong?

CHAPTER II

TRIALS OF A SCHOLAR

I HAVE heard it hinted often that a Wandering Scholar's life is a disguised holiday. For all reply let me submit some notes of a ride from the Rock Monument region of Phrygia to the Cilician coast at Selefke. It was in 1887, and my first essay in Anatolia unaided by the great experience of Mr. Ramsay. My companion, H. A. Brown, had had a previous year's experience; he was no archaeologist, and accompanied me in quest of adventure simply—a quest which had taken him alone into the wildest part of Albania, and led him at last to such a death as he used to covet most, with Major Wilson's little force in Matabeleland.

July 1st.—We said good-bye to Ramsay this morning at Beykoï, not without misgiving, for there is said to be famine this summer in the south country, and we are desperately ill-prepared for scarcity. Our plan is to make our way to the southern sea at the least possible cost and with no encumbrances, by a route lying mostly off the main line of travel. Therefore we have no baggage-horse, and have left behind us tents, beds, most of our cooking utensils, and all our tinned stores, except a few sardines. We shall carry a little rice, sugar and tea, a change of raiment, surveying

instruments and note-books in our saddle-bags, and in those of the servant whom we are to hire. One of R.'s men has come with us to Afium Karahissar for the look of the thing and to help us find another servant. We have had five hours' very hot ride over treeless plains and the rough causeways that are built through the marsh outside this town, and have halted a few minutes only at one of those little bath-houses so frequently seen in Anatolia, which are built over a natural warm or mineral spring. Several peasants were paddling in opaque grey water covered with a floating scum, and scooping now and then a draught from the common bath. We rode into Karahissar after midday, I feeling feverish and limp and mighty indifferent to the jeers and occasional insults with which Christian strangers in this fanatical town are greeted. The *khan* is filled with the noisome stench of its cesspool, and the best room we could procure is lined with matting absolutely alive with bugs.

The first necessity was to procure money ; and after food and rest we set out for the house of an Armenian who acts as agent for the Ottoman Bank. As I was provided with a letter of advice and a cheque on the branch itself, the Agent could not wriggle out of cashing it, though he searched his heart by the space of an hour. But B.'s London cheque he rejected firmly, pressing us, however, the while to accept his guidance round the town and dine at his house. Since we shall need his services

to-morrow in our search for a man and a horse we could hardly decline, and were led rather a weary tramp round the outskirts and up to the wonderful citadel, once known as Acroenos, and a great Byzantine stronghold. It stands on a pillar of basalt, which springs up eight hundred feet sheer from the plain, and can be reached only by a stair cut in the rock. There are ruined gates and bastions of small mortared masonry, huge cisterns in the rock, a little broken mosque (once a chapel), and some rusty, dismantled guns. Dinner awaited our return, a meal offered in all kindness, but not tempting to a jaded appetite—course after course of watery vegetables smothered in sour cream, rice under the same cream, stringy lamb's flesh garnished with the same, and sad, sickly pastry. We picked at them with our fingers, and the kind host loaded our plates with tit-bits selected by himself, rallying us that we ate so little. Fleas swarmed, and the only beverage on a thirsty night was a slightly odorous and faint-tasting water. I crawled back to the *khan*, and passed an evil night of pain and fitful dozing among the insects and heavy-hanging stench.

July 2nd.—An interminable day. I was too ill to dress till the morning was far gone, and lay afterwards in the intervals of my malady on frowzy cushions, faintly watching faces peering through the bars of our window and a pushing crowd offering antiques to Brown. The latter bought a horse,

saddle and all, in the *bazar* for seven and a half pounds Turkish, and engaged an old soldier, one Halil Ibrahim, at three and a half dollars a week to ride it behind us. Late in the afternoon, feeling a little less ill, I accompanied B. through a jeering mob to the Government House. We were received with a mixture of suspicion and respect, which became intelligible as soon as we perceived, sitting abjectly at the lower end of the *daïs*, Sultan Bey and his Circassian henchmen who entertained us last week while we were mapping and digging about the Tomb of Midas. They had in fact been charged with complicity in our reported search for gold; and the governor, divided between greed and fear, had resolved, it seems, to let the Englishmen alone, but to make the poor Circassians disgorge. Our account of mere surveying and clearing earth from fallen sculptures was received with polite disdain, and we departed without coffee but with our papers; but at what price the Bey may eventually have purchased his *congé* I know not. I fainted more than once in the evening and passed a half-delirious night.

July 3rd. Sunday.—When morning came I was very weak and low at the thought of another day of heat and stench and noise. Was it impossible to go very gently about an hour's journey on our road to some quiet village with purer air? The fancy began to possess me that I should never escape from the pestiferous *khan* if not now; and

in any case we could but try. The horses were brought out, and the saddle-bags packed, and, after much opium and scalding milk, I was lifted into the saddle, with a rug and an overcoat rolled before and behind for support. At first we proceeded uncertainly; but, as the town was left behind, something in the pure morning air, something in the sense of motion and escape put heart into me again, and I kept on. The farther we went, the better I became; and indeed I suppose my malady must have been largely nervous, for in the end, with the exception of a short halt at a bridge, into whose balustrade a Roman milestone and a Greek inscription were built, I sat in the saddle for five hours, and at midday reached Felleli, a large half-deserted Turk village of the plain. I could eat nothing, but I slept, and so pulled myself round sufficiently to copy in the afternoon the few inscribed stones reported by the villagers. One chanced to be in the courtyard of a house whose owners were all out with the flocks on the hills; but two men offered to take me in, if the dogs should prove to be not about. Armed with sickles, we went to the courtyard, and, finding it empty, sat down before a small altar-stone built into the house-front. The inscription was upside down, and couched in that unfamiliar Phrygian language which was used still in sepulchral imprecations as late as the third century A. D.—the ‘speech of Lycaonia’, in which Paul spoke to the men of Lystra. Therefore I was slow about my task, and

a house-dog, who had been scavenging elsewhere, had time to return. He made straight for us open-mouthed; and, roused by his furious protest, three of his fellows returned hotfoot. I finished my copy in indecent haste, and, forming square, we began a crab-like retreat towards the gate, swinging sickles and hurling stones at the maddened dogs, who rushed and leapt from all sides at once. There were about fifty yards to cover, and I never had a livelier five minutes. For all their swinging of sickles and hurling of stones both my native guards were bitten about the legs, and their clothing was torn to ribbons; but they stuck to me loyally, and succeeded in keeping the shaggy brutes just at bay until we reached the gate. Beyond that point none of the dogs pursued an inch. In the late afternoon we took the road again, our path lightened by a huge forest fire on the sides of Sultan Daggh, and so came much exhausted to a *khan* at Buluwadun sometime after nightfall.

July 4th.—We are at the head of the valley of the Phrygian Lakes, down which Cyrus marched with his ten thousand Greeks on the way to Cunaxa. Here lies the site of Ipsus; and the battle in which the greatest of the Successors, Seleucus, won Alexander's heritage from old Antigonus, was fought probably on the grassy plain over which we rode to-day. Two mounds near Chai perhaps conceal the slain. I recovered enough strength to-day to begin a rough route-map with prismatic compass

and dead reckoning of pace. Such surveying is an irritating occupation at the best of times. If the compass reading is to approach accuracy, it cannot be taken from the saddle. You must dismount twenty times in a morning. If a horse be left loose, he will sidle off the track to browse and get bogged; if you slip your arm through his bridle, he jerks it up just as the needle is about to come to rest. He declines to stand to be remounted; the ill-girthed saddle slips round unless you throw your heel over like lightning—and agility is not one's strongest point when weak and stiff from a malady hardly cured. So we crossed but slowly to Chai, and turned down beside, rather than on, the high road to Konia; for every one seems to go beside and not on this road, which is grass-grown, with bridges rotten and often disconnected from the embankments. A little village came in sight on the flank of the mountain, and we turned up to examine it in hope of finding relics of Ipsus; but no sooner had we arrived there than B. was seized with violent shivering fits, and it became patent that we must stay where we were for the night. We repaired to the village guest-house, and a weary afternoon ensued for me, who became the centre of a crowd of gaping rustics, B. lying torpid the while; and a wearier evening was in store, for no food appeared until nigh ten o'clock, the headman's wife having long protested that she would not cook for *giaurs*.

5th.—Things have gone better to-day after a night rendered odorous at first by the proximity of a herd of buffaloes, goats and sheep, penned in the courtyard of our house. We were disturbed also long before light by the uneasy lowing of the kine and their futile but persistent efforts to get out to the pastures. A string of villages lay on our road, all bowered in fruit gardens, and we were received courteously everywhere. B. seems better, having had a long midday rest at Sakli, while in the blistering heat I hunted up inscriptions of the old bishopric of Julia. Finally we came at nightfall to a pretty village, Deretchin, near the spot where Xenophon saw the Fount of Midas. A cool stream rushes down before the guest-house, and the peasants bring us apricots and pears. But our serious evening meal has once more been long delayed, and having tasted nothing all day except a little unleavened bread and milk at sunrise and some dry bread and rice at noon, we feel unkindly towards Halil, who dodders about and sits eternally like a true Turk, and will bustle nobody. B. overheard him say at Sakli, ‘ These are poor men ; the one who was rich (i. e. Ramsay) stayed behind ’ ; and I fancy Halil chafes at long rides and poor fare in such a service.

6th.—Overnight a man assured me that there was a ‘ stone lion ’ in the village, but in the morning neither he nor his lion was to be found. Then appeared others, saying that a certain village,

Uchkuyu, at the head of the Aksheher Lake, was full of 'written stones'. Since it happens to lie more or less on the route I had intended to take, we started for it about 6.30, after the usual breakfast of dry unleavened bread, unrelieved this morning even by milk. Our way lay over the marshy grass between the Lakes of Eber and Aksheher. Much of the plain is cultivated and dotted with summer camps of nomads, and two sheets of water lay right and left, sparkling under the low morning sun. There proved to be never a 'written stone' to redeem the arid nakedness of Uchkuyu; and after a meal, hardly obtained, of barley meal cooked in rancid butter, we came down again to the reedy margin of the lake, and rode all the afternoon along its north-eastern bank, seeing no life but its waterfowl, and hearing only the splash of ripples, driven up by a westerly breeze. The Turkman village that we were seeking receded always round successive corners of the bluffs, and the sun had set a good half-hour before we rode lamely into a small settlement of Yuruk nomads. There were no men to be seen; half the hovels were tenantless, and women's heads peered furtively a moment round doors and were withdrawn hastily to an accompaniment of the putting up of bars and shooting of bolts. In vain we knocked and asked for water and a little bread; the wolfdogs answered, and forced us to retreat to the outskirts of the village and tie up our horses in a ruined byre, full of dung and fleas. The poor beasts found no provender and no

water, for the Lake was far away in the dark, and there was no fountain to be seen; and we for our part shared a single box of sardines with Halil. Then we lay down and waited for morning, B. writhing in paroxysms of ague-pain shooting through back and loins.

7th.—The first dawn was hardly in the sky when we were on the road again, following a broad track in hope of a kindlier village. Nor were we disappointed; for after a few miles we sighted Korashli, and an hour later were devouring a rancid *pilau*. But water failed still; the muddy trickle of the village fountain just slaked our own thirst, but was denied by the Turkmans to our horses. Therefore we were forced to press on without delay over the arid, famine-stricken hills, B. complaining of his back the while, and the horses beginning to fail so much that we dismounted and led them. We had tramped for a little more than three hours when suddenly the horses threw up their noses, and one, jerking himself loose, broke into a hand gallop and disappeared ahead. From the next rise showed the village of Kumbulu, and there the stampeded horse was found at the fountain, painfully sucking up water past his cruel spoon-bit. There was drink in plenty and good hospitality withal; but alas! the *ayan*, who takes charge of strangers, being a veteran of the Crimea, declared that he knows Englishmen and their tastes. They like roast fowl; no rice, no barley-meal, no eggs for them. We must wait an

hour and a real English meal would be put before us. We waited an hour, and two, and three, and at last a poor blackened thing appeared, which we assaulted first with knives and then tried to tear asunder, each holding to a drumstick, and finally absorbed as best we might in alternate sucks, each taking a side.

8th.—A short day's ride by the reedy Chausji Lakes, haunt of flies innumerable and of many buffaloes, wallowing in black slime, before we halted at Ilghin, the site of Tyriacum, where Cyrus reviewed his troops in presence of the Cilician Queen, and the Greeks scared the barbarians so sorely in the sham fight. There were inscriptions everywhere, in the mosque, in the fountains, and in the graveyards, and when B. declared that he was too ill to go further, and rain came on, I spent a happy enough afternoon following an Armenian guide into courtyards and among the tombs. The Governor of Aksheher called upon us this evening in the *khan*—usually a haughty official, but for the nonce our very humble servant. He arrested, it seems, a fortnight ago a Levantine Englishman, our Vice-Consul at Angora, for cruising in search of water-birds' eggs around the Lake of the Forty Martyrs, and he is now on his way to Konia to answer the peremptory summons of his superior, Said Pasha, 'Ingeliz Said', the most notorious Anglophile in Turkey. The poor man talked with nervous affability about antiquities, and Europe, and other

things, which he neither cared for nor knew, and ended by soliciting our very gracious intercession, so soon as we should be come to Konia.

9th.—B. gets no better; dysenteric symptoms are supervening on his fever, and it is evident that we must get to the sea as best we can, turning neither to the right nor the left. The heavy rain last night made the morning air very chill and the plain a holding quagmire, through which we floundered, huddled in our overcoats. At the foot of the hills B. collapsed and we had to halt awhile. Then we pushed on for two hours more up earthy paths which were still, or had hardly ceased to be, watercourses, having on our right flank the end of Sultan Dag, shrouded in black, low-hanging cloud. There are more Circassians about than is comfortable for owners of horses. At one o'clock we reached Osmanjik, and I left B. in the guest-house while I copied some late Byzantine epitaphs. On returning I found him no better but very anxious to push on. So we started indeed, but after half an hour his pain and state of collapse left no alternative but to face about and take up quarters at Osmanjik for the night. As a result I bagged one more epitaph, and had one of those weary, abortive rides which madden the Western traveller. A Turk presented himself, offering to guide me to a hill two hours away, where were 'stones covered with writing and faces of men and animals'. *Bakshish* to depend on results. As Hittite things are to be

looked for hereabouts, I mounted in some hope, and followed for two good hours through a couple of Circassian villages up to the crown of a bare, cultivated hill. The Turk halted among loose boulders; I looked about and demanded where then were the faces like men? He pointed to plough-marks on one of the boulders, and I burst into oaths. The man of the East only spread out his hands in deprecation. Did I not want written stones? There might have been some here. God willed that there was none. What was he to do? I gulped down my wrath and rode back sadder and a little wiser for another proof how incomprehensible is the East.

10th, *Sunday*.—Raining again and very chill. B. seemed better for his rest, and we pushed on past Kunderaz where were many inscriptions, one in Phrygian, and through dripping pine woods to the summit of the pass. The sky cleared and a gently declining valley smiled before us, divided by a bright, noisy stream. Our midday bread seemed sweeter than before, and a nomad shepherd consented to call up his nannies and sell us a pannikin of warm milk. As we near Konia there is more life, and twice to-day we have had to draw aside on the mountain paths to let long strings of swaying, bearded camels jingle past. Strange how the horses hate these familiar acquaintances! A camel or a wood-waggon, deserted in the path, its shafts in air, must be circumvented by twenty yards at

least. We halted for the night at Tatkoï and watched the sun go down over the great earth-sea of the Central Plains. On the southern horizon stood up, like blue islands, the Kara Dagħ and Hadji Baba Dagħ, near Karaman. For the rest, it was all one misty level, save where far to the south-east a line of points glittered on the chain of Taurus. Our meagre train and light baggage placed us to-night under the unpleasant necessity of eating at the common meal of the guest-house with three casual wayfarers, God's creatures like ourselves, and noways inclined to concede to the owners of only three horses and a man the privilege of privacy.

13th.—We have spent these three days in Konia, which we reached in three hours from Tatkoï. All thought of riding further is at an end, since B. has become steadily worse and cannot sit a horse. The only resort is a native waggon, and I have found a waggoner who will take us all to Selefke, in five days, for fifteen dollars. Heaven knows what the journey will be like! for the waggon has no sort of springs, and the road is said to be unmetalled. We start to-morrow. Two of our horses have been sold at ruinous loss owing partly to the famine—they are said to be eating rather than keeping horses in the villages near—partly to a 'ring' which took advantage of our necessities. The third horse is still unsold and must trot behind the waggon to Karaman. B. has been very ill all

the time, hardly able to last through our interview with the Governor on Tuesday, and generally lying somnolent in the bug-ridden room of the *khân* ; but several people have been kind to us, notably a Greek doctor, who would take no fee, press it how we might ; also Mr. Keun, representative of the Ottoman Bank, who introduced us to Said Pasha, and M. Guise, agent of a Smyrna mohair house. With Said Pasha we had a long talk ; he is in official exile for his English sympathies, but they continue unabated. He was educated at Woolwich, speaks our language admirably, and takes in, covertly through the Bank agent, the weekly edition of *The Times*. From his lips we learned our first news of the Jubilee, and the progress of Home Rule, of which, and of Mr. Gladstone, he spoke much ill. He played great part in the conclusion of the Cyprus Convention, and since that event and our occupation of Egypt has been in disgrace, daily expecting a mandate to repair to Yemen, or, at best, Baghdad.

I have seen something of this old, old city, the first, according to one legend, to emerge after the Deluge. It saw Cyrus pass with his Greeks, and received St. Paul, and Frederick Barbarossa after his last great victory. Now it is dying, the half of it waste, and even the mud core of the Seljuk walls, displaying inverted impressions of Greek and Latin inscriptions, where the facing marbles have been stripped, is disappearing fast. There is very little left of Greek Iconium, except the Christian community at Sillé hard by, whose forefathers listened

to St. Paul, and Roman monolithic columns in the mosques ; but some Seljuk glories survive from the epoch when Konia was capital of the Empire of Rum. Most beautiful is the Mevlevi College with its tomb-mosque, where the Kiliç Arslans and Khaikhosrus are buried, each with his turban at his coffin head, beneath swinging silver lamps and tiles of priceless blue. One of its dervishes still girds the Sultan with the sword of state on the occasion of his enthronement at Stambul. And in other mosques and among the ruins of the Palace are many white marble stalactitic canopies, characteristic of Arab work also, and to be traced to a common source in Persia, although Moslems believe that they perpetuate the memory of a cavern where the Prophet hid himself in a time of trial. The town is said to be healthy, free from mosquitoes and fever, in spite of the marshy plain about it and the refuse of three thousand years which leaks into its shallow wells. But trade does not come its way now, and the *bazars* are mean and half deserted, and the new block of Government offices stands up rather ostentatiously above the low mud roofs. The present Governor has done all in human power to better its state, and that of its province ; he has exacted honesty in tax-gathering, assured public safety, reduced the undisciplined police to order, and begun a road to the sea. But he cannot remedy the Imperial arrangement under which the Konia revenues are charged with the Russian indemnity, nor avert the consequences of official greed at

Stambul, thanks to which no reasonable concession can be obtained for the extension of the Aidin railway to the Plains.

14th.—The waggon started early this morning, and ran easily over the Plains; and B., lying full length on straw and rugs, has passed the day better than any for a fortnight past. There was nothing to note on the great spotty level, except shrivelled crops of barley, sad presage of famine. Just at sunset we reached Karkhan, our waggoner's native village, where we have been treated as honoured guests. *Pilau* mixed with dried grapes, a roast lamb, and a curious thin paste, a sort of damper not unpalatable, were served by our host and his sons. Rosewater was brought to wash hands and face before eating and again after, and at the last admirable coffee. Thus far all was silence and dignity; but no sooner were we seen to be reclining comfortably, cigarette in hand, than all present fell like famished wolves on the remains of our meal at the lower end of the room; and ere we had drawn three whiffs, they had cleared the tray, tipped a quart of water down their throats (the peasants, like animals, drink only after food), eructated an appreciative compliment to the bounteous provider of the feast, and begun to light up themselves.

15th.—On the Plains all day, but to-morrow we attack the Taurus. We have come to Karaman by

way of the great mound of Gudelissin, which is probably the site of Derbe, but has now little enough to show of what St. Paul saw, and through the dead town of Kassaba, with its mouldering Seljuk walls, and *khans*, and baths. Karaman is a pleasant little town of Turks, with a clear stream split into sparkling channels and conducted through many walled gardens. But its sun set at the Ottoman conquest, and only the shell of its Castle and the exquisite stalactitic portal of a divinity-school remind the traveller that it was once the capital of the Grand Karaman, who fills so large a place in the story of the feudal kingdoms of Cyprus and Armenia, and in the latest glorious records of the Knights of Rhodes. A little Armenian, superintendent of the tobacco *régie*, has given us shelter and food, but he means to cheat me of my horse, and I can get no bid. We cannot wait, nor can we well drag the beast over Taurus, and I shall be forced to abandon him after all. We hear that in this famine year the district is full of broken men, robbing and running contraband tobacco; but we have too little to lose to be nervous. Indeed, shortness of cash has lost me to-night a little clay tablet which may be Hittite, and I have been able only to take a wax impression.

16th.—We have climbed three thousand feet, and the waggon is drawn aside for the night by a little spring in a hidden hollow. The spot is chosen to escape the stray highwaymen who patrol the road.

The day's journey has been rather weary. I of course, for my part, could walk up the long bare slopes; but B. had to lie still and be jolted over the boulders of the unfinished roadway. The scenery is all bald and grey, one dull slope of denuded crumbling rock, rolling up unbroken except by a chain of hillocks which range like huge *tumuli* on our left. No sign of human settlement, and hardly a trace of a human wanderer, and no water, except this trickling source, between a point two hours out of Karaman and Marah, which we hope to reach to-morrow night. B. seems to have fallen into a state of utter collapse to-night and to have lost heart, and I shall be more than thankful to see the sea.

17th.—At midday we reached the summit (6,100 feet), having traversed for ten miles a very desert of the damned, ridge upon ridge of rock, like the picked bones of the earth. But once across the watershed we looked into a kinder world, and long before reaching Marah were driving under the pines. Unfortunately the descent is far worse for B.'s sore bones than the ascent has been, standing to it indeed as torture to acute discomfort. The waggon takes flying leaps from boulder to boulder, crashes across gullies, and rocks like a ship at sea. Two dervishes in a second waggon caught us up this morning, and at an awkward corner of the descent gave us a singular illustration of that Oriental immobility, which we sometimes elevate into stoicism,

and sometimes, as fatalism, excuse. A wheel went over the edge of the road and their waggon was brought up short, the horses plunging, and the edge of the road beginning to break away. Below was a sheer fall of some 200 feet. We were a little way behind at the time, and yelled to the dervishes to jump; but neither they nor their waggoner stirred a foot, and if we had not rushed up, and I pulled the dervishes down by main force, while our waggoner seized their horses' heads, the three would have supped in Paradise.

Marah is nothing but a *khan*, half a dozen huts of nomadic shepherds, and some cabins for labourers employed on the road. The whilom overseer of these navvies has put himself and his hut at our disposal. He is a Greek of Greeks, clothed in assurance as in a garment, not clothed, indeed, in many other garments worth mentioning. He has a tattered Strabo, I know not why or whence, and he has corrected me graciously on points of Cilician topography, imparting with easy confidence certain novel readings of his ancestral tongue. He bade us command him in everything, and call for whatever we might desire to eat or drink, for to ask in his house was to have. In the event he has eaten cheerfully a dinner procured at the *khan* and paid for by ourselves.

18th.—We left our host of last night, newly risen in the rags which serve him alike for night and day, and waving farewell with a sort of bastard Parisian

grace ; and the waggon went off leaping, pitching and rocking out of one shadowy gorge into another. The vegetation began to take on a sub-tropic character, arbutus, lentisk, and oleander replacing the pine and the beech. The cliffs on either hand reflect the heat on to these banks of verdure, and mists, rising nightly into the strait gorges from the Cilician plain and the sea, feed their luxuriance. But ever as we descended the heat increased and the road grew worse. It was just one o'clock when we emerged on to an open shelf, to see a great shimmering expanse open below us, rising to a hazy horizon. *Thalassa ! Thalassa !* the sea at last. Even the waggoner praised Allah it was the sea, and was whipping round the curves towards the brink of a deep *cañon*, when a sudden exclamation from me caused him to check his horses. There had arisen above the sky line the silhouette of a walled city, with battlements and towers outlined against the light ; and through a field-glass I could descry a gate opening towards the opposite lip of the gorge. What was it ? No one has recorded a city hereabouts. Was it Olba, so often sought for ? I looked for a path down the *cañon's* side, but there was none. The waggon in any case could not cross the gorge, and what could be done with B. during the hours I must be away ? How also were we to reach Selefke to-night, for it was already late ? B. had but one idea—the sea. What were ruins to a man with ague in his bones and continual dysenteric pain ? We debated long but found that there was

no alternative but to proceed; and a turn of the road shut out this my first fairy city, seen and lost like a castle in a dream. During the last hour of the descent we passed a vast number of pillared tombs choked with brushwood, the cemetery of old Seleucia; and here and there, on commanding points, towers of rude polygonal masonry, which the pirates of the second century B. C. built as refuges from the Roman cruisers. On the right of our track reach after reach of the Calycadnus shone far into the folds of the hills. It was late in the afternoon when the waggon, its wheels loosened and its tilt in rags from frequent encounter with overhanging boughs, rattled on to the old peaked bridge below the castle of Selefke; and an hour after dark we heard the 'longed-for plash of waves' upon the beach of Aklimán.

Here ended our uncertainties, and for B. the horrors of travel with ague pains in his bones and dysentery always threatening. We had, indeed, two evil nights to pass in that squalid *scala*, where mosquitoes rise in millions off the Calycadnus marsh at sunset, and hot ripples lap on the shingle beneath a heavy moon, like a sea in a disordered dream. But the day between the nights brought no anxiety about a stage to be travelled ere nightfall, but to B. rest on our host's *divan*, or better still on sea-sand, which moulds itself to every curve of a weary back. Early on the 20th a steamer anchored in the bay, and, finding that she was making the tour by

Iskenderun to Smyrna, we boarded her and obtained passage. The voyage lasted eight days, spent in running up to little ports like Castellórizo and Alaya and Adalia, names that one had known of old in romances of the Crusades. There we haggled for cargo with slimy native agents and took off cattle at nothing a head to chouse a rival Greek. A dirtier and more cockroach-infested craft I never sailed upon than that Levantine coaster—peace to her ribs! They are whitening now on the Syrian coast, where she went quietly aground one calm night without loss to life and decently insured. The officers were Scotch and the crew Greek, and the latter understood the former according to the measure of vitriolic expletives. It might be said that the ship was worked wholly by profanity. The captain, meeting a friend at Iskenderun, looked on the Samian wine till he took a fever, and we did without him for the rest of the voyage. The cook, objecting to a Jew who was singing near his galley, sliced him from eye to chin and had to be put in irons ; and who after that event cooked our greasy dinner I never dared inquire.

Many are the ridiculous memories that revive with the name of that disreputable tub which scavenged along the Levantine coasts, shipping contraband where she could not get licensed cargo, and defying pilots and the rules of ports ; but none funnier than of a certain squally night on which we ran out of Iskenderun, the whole sea shining red in the reflected light of a forest fire. We were carrying

on the quarter deck a pasha's *harîm*, come from the interior and probably new to the sea ; and as the ship pitched and rolled, and wives and children and slaves fell very sick, the oldest and stoutest duenna of them all, starting up unveiled and half-clad, rushed to the side and began to climb the rail, with the evident purpose of leaping out of the accursed ship somehow somewhither. But the old Scotch mate was too quick for her ; in an instant he had gripped her waist, and for five minutes there was a Homeric battle, he cursing gutturally as he held on like grim death, she hacking out behind, twining her disengaged hand in his hair, and defaming his maternal ancestors to the tenth generation. The *harîm* shrieked at the awful spectacle of their comrade in the grasp of a man, but there was none to help. The pasha was lying abject in his berth below, and we enjoyed the scene far too keenly to cut it short. At the last the old lady succumbed exhausted, and the Scot bore her back like a sack to her bed. At Adalia B. brewed himself a decoction of eucalyptus leaves, and whether because the nauseous draught had virtue, or because he believed that it had, he was recovering steadily when, on July 28th, our gallant craft dropped her anchor in Smyrna Bay.

CHAPTER III

THE ANATOLIAN

No more chastening instance than Anatolia could be desired by a moralist. The Lamentation of Sulpicius over the desolate cities of Hellas might be echoed now in Asia Minor upon sites that were still great and populous in his day. Its peoples have shrunk within it like the lean and slippered pantaloons. The walls of Iconium enclose twice the space of Konia; rare mud-hovels are scattered over the mound of holy Tyana; the squalor of Khatyn Serai has succeeded to Lystra, and the filth of Armenian Pürk to Pompey's Nicopolis. The list might be prolonged at will; tombs of ignoble Moslem saints attest some site of a Holy of Holies, and periodic fairs alone bring back feeble life to market-places once crowded day by day with the traders of half Asia. From sea to sea vestiges of better days cover the hillsides, tide-marks of the receding levels of civilization—strange hieroglyphs and stranger sculptures of the early Hittite times; stone lace-work on the Phrygian tombs, simulating the carpet-veil stretched before the other life; Roman aqueducts, theatres and roads; Byzantine churches, and Armenian castles; last of all, the Seljuk glories, the Mevlevi College at Konia, with its delicate harmony of marbles, its cool cloisters and fountains, and the shade of its

almond trees, Sultan Khan rotting alone in the Plains with a portal fit for a palace, and the Divinity Schools of Sivas and Karaman. These reflect a sunset, since which there has been no dawn.

And among all this slow death the most pathetic figure is the Anatolian 'Turk' himself, 'unspeakable' only in that he speaks so little. 'Welcome, you have come!' '*Marhaba!*' he will say, and little else, unless in a garrulous mood he add, 'Whence are you come?' Reply 'From London', not necessarily because such is the truth, but because he will know no other European town. Say nothing of its five millions of inhabitants, because five thousand, or five hundred, or fifty would convey just as much or as little to his mind; far better to remark that in England eggs are sometimes twopence each. 'Dolt!' said a progressive *hoja* to a peasant who had asked me if London were indeed larger than his own tiny hamlet, 'Who does not know that London is quite three times as big?'

This sort of 'Turk unspeakable' is a slow-moving, slow-thinking rustic, who limits his speech to three tenses out of the sixty-four in his language, and his interests to the price of barley. Aliens, Greek, Armenian, Circassian, thrust him on one side and take his little parcel of land by fraud or force—there is no real distinction in Anatolia. He appeals to no one, but dies by inches, begging at the door of the village mosque, until he may pass to that paradise of earthy joys which is to compensate so

many earthly sorrows not foreseen by the Prophet. He is dignified in his slow way, strong and unclean as one of his own buffaloes, and clad in a shirt torn and blotched and tucked away into a leathern pouch-belt, from which he will disinter oddments of string and rags, flint and steel, and scraps of adamantine pemmican. Pendulous cotton breeches, patched and overpatched, are gathered clumsily above woollen cross garters that all Euphrates could not wash white; and with inherited knack he winds about his tasselled *tarbush* a blue rag, or, if he be a *hoja*, a white, or haply a dubious green, should he claim to be one of the Prophet's myriad kin.

In energy and intelligence he takes rank a grade below his dog, who shares his profound and not altogether causeless suspicion of strangers, but attacks more vivaciously and is reconciled more frankly. Ask an Anatolian if any single thing, the commonest in all the economy of nature, is to be found in his village, and he will say, 'No!' before he has had time to grasp your question. Describe a 'written stone': he has never seen one although two Roman milestones may stand right and left of his own hearthstone. None the less he is a kindly creature enough; but his wife——! She clutches a coin and spits at the giver; she denies you bread, water, and shelter, offer what you will, should the decision rest with her. No suspicion of the virtues of Islam relieves her fanaticism, and woe betide any traveller who, riding tentless in summer, finds the

men gone to the hills, and their villages left to the women.

Small blame to them after all if they are ignorant shrews, seeing to what extent they are treated as mere chattels of the man, condemned to the hardest field work and to walk while their lords ride. Even Schopenhauer, who recommended 'a little ploughing' for the weaker sex, would have been staggered to see women carrying and laying the bricks of a rising house, watched by a ring of squatting men. I have seen a mother pass and repass a rapid rocky stream, carrying in succession a husband and two grown sons; and on the bare stones of Taurus all the women of a migrating horde trailed their bleeding feet after the camels, horses, and asses which bore their fathers, husbands, and brothers. God made woman out of man to be a helpmeet for him. If the relation is ever inverted the man must be a slave, and such in the eyes of Moslem peasants an English husband is, who at a word from his wife will rise and bring her a chair. Expostulate, and you will find the travelled Moslem turn upon you crying shame on those who love and value their womenfolk so little that they put them within the reach of all other men. In truth, an Anatolian Turk never shows to better advantage than in some phases of family life, above all with his children, those golden-haired babies soon to be hardened by labour and blunted by poverty, stagnating in the same hovels that the fathers inherited from their fathers.

Travellers who assert that they 'like the Turk', mean such a 'Turk' as this Anatolian peasant. One is bound to like him, if only for his courage and his simplicity, and his blind fidelity and his loyalty. The villagers who fought so stubbornly at Plevna and Shipka never received a piastre, but, though they spit at the name of Osman, who, say they, sat down in one place that they might die, and invoke Allah's curse on Suleiman, who sold them in the Balkans, they say never a word against the Padishah, whose conscription is their chief woe, a woe from which the much pitied Christian is free. When at a season of famine or earthquake British charity sends bread in British gunboats, the blessing of God is called not on our head, but on the Padi-shah's. These 'Turks' are honest, too, able, unlike some Arabs, to withstand long temptation of gold, and gentlemen full of simple consideration for a traveller and just instinct of his needs. Alight at one of their guest-houses—in a Moslem village the house best built and furnished—and the elder who is commissioned by the community to attend on strangers busies himself at once to have the room swept, beds prepared, and due provision made for the horses. Presently arrive the notables, salaaming silently as they seat themselves round the walls, and again when settled. Coffee berries are produced, roasted in a wire basket, pounded, brought three times to the boil on the wood ashes, and served by a young man bowing hand on breast. The long silences are broken by a very few questions, until

you show a sign, the slightest, of fatigue, when forthwith he of most dignity will rise, salaam once more, shuffle his shoes on to his feet below the *divan*, and without a word lead out the rest. Had they been Christians you hardly could have swept them out at midnight *vi et armis*.

The vices of the worst Moslem ruffian are at least those of a conquering race; and, after all, ruffians are rare among the peasantry of the central Plateau. In a lean year, when the leaves are on the trees and it is safe lying in the forests, villagers may take to the hills to avoid tax-gatherers; but at the worst they will steal only cattle. Five such amateur horse-thieves hung about us once for some days in Cilicia, and might have given trouble had they not been forced by hunger to send two of their number into a Christian village for bread. The two were recognized, seized and marched away towards the nearest town; but they cut their bonds the first night with steel or silver, and vanished with the rest of the band. I have heard of only two regular outlaw chiefs in four years, of two men, that is to say, who kept the hills year by year. The one, Osman, ranged the province of Konia for some three summers with a dozen of his kidney, taking purses and lifting cattle; but he was of the romantic sort, delighting to rob the Sultan's post or some sleek official, and to give to the poor what he took from the rich. He would carry off maidens in order to dower them, and dash on the best horse in Anatolia through the midst of the troopers. The

other, an Armenian, was a ruffian more truculent, who set the seal on his fame by stopping a French vice-consul near Aleppo and taking from him two hundred pounds and all the garments except such as decency requires. There were strange rumours abroad after the affair; how the consul's possessions were seen in official houses at Aleppo, and of a pasha departing suddenly for Yemen. Certain it is that the brigand was not caught, for a little later he was taking toll of all travellers on a road not an hour's journey out of Kaisariyeh, and he was still abroad in 1894 with a little following of Circassians somewhere in North Syria or Mesopotamia.

Such robbers as Osman and Chulu, the Armenian, do not hold captives to ransom; civilization is not advanced enough in the interior, and brigandage, as the word is understood usually, follows in the wake of locomotives and Greek newspapers. The robber of the interior is a highwayman who will do you no bodily hurt if you submit, and at worst tie you to a tree to secure his own escape. And even from the kidnappers of the coast regions the European traveller with no local connexion has little to fear. His movements are rapid and unknown, and he goes armed with weapons for which the native entertains an inordinate respect. His friends and relatives are far away and his price is not certain; and, most important of all, experience has shown the brigand class that the capture of a hundred native merchants, their children and their wives, will not cause one-half the hue and cry that

can be raised by a consul with a gunboat at his back in the bay. The wise brigand has no mind to be besieged on a mountain side, where food is scarce and water bad, for the sake of a ransom which he may never get, and, if got, cannot enjoy. He learned the folly of vaulting ambition in 1884, and the story, well-remembered in all the region of Smyrna, is worth telling again to illustrate Ottoman methods and a type of brigandage now hardly known. In that year two local terrors, combining forces, conceived and executed a mighty *coup*. Introducing themselves by force and collusion into the custom-house of a little *scala*, where a coasting steamer was to touch at night-time, they seized and gagged every one who landed from her—man, woman, and child—and carried them to the hills. But the noise of the feat awoke the Ministry of the Interior, and peremptory orders came to Smyrna that no ransoms should be paid, but the brigands' heads must be brought in at any cost. The pursuit began hotly enough; but Ottoman energy is seldom equal to sustained effort, and as it cooled the chiefs saw that there was room for hope. They had still many of their prisoners, and, working on the feelings of powerful relatives in Smyrna, they concluded a negotiation at last with the astounding convention that, if they would give up all their captives unransomed, they should themselves not only go scot free but be made policemen under their own leaders. So it was done; and the new guardians of the peace were sent inland.

For a while all went well. Then rumours began to filter down to Smyrna of a reign of terror up the Maeander valley, of rapes and blackmailing and murders done in the name of the law ; and ere long a second peremptory despatch from headquarters showed that the news had reached Stambul. What was to be done to capture the armed ruffians ? A trap was laid, very obvious, but, it seems, sufficient. The new policemen were told that certain slanders had reached official ears in Smyrna, but the Vali was their firm friend. If they would disarm suspicion they must appear in Smyrna, and their appointments should be confirmed and their chiefs receive decorations. So they came down. Before entering the *serai* they stacked their rifles, and went up to the official presence with only pistols and sidearms. The Vali was cordial ; decorations were promised and they turned to go, only to encounter a file of soldiers waiting in the corridor, and be bidden surrender. One chief and his followers threw up their hands, but the other, firing a pistol into the floor, sprang back and called on his men to stand by him. Stand by him they did with pistol and knife against rifle and bayonet until, his followers dead or bound and himself riddled with bullets, the chief ruffian reeled back to the Vali's room to take a life worth taking ; but his Excellency had vanished by the window. Thus ended for a time the dare-devil type of Moslem brigand in the Smyrna province, and he has never revived as an organized terror.

Nevertheless, one must have a care. Armed shepherds near the coast are often potential robbers if they see odds clearly in their favour. Near Smyrna, in the autumn of 1887, mere amateurs, who expected no such prize, seized upon four members of a rich European family whom Allah threw in their path. Similarly Mr. Macmillan was taken by shepherds in the following year on the Mysian Olympus, and killed, it seems, for what he had upon him, his amateur captors fearing to play for so high a stake as a ransom. There seems, however, to be but little general sympathy with the brigand, and an energetic governor, such as was Midhat at Smyrna, can make his province safe very quickly by timely severity. The most part of the peasantry are men of peace, needing no military force to coerce them, giving little occasion to the scanty police, and observing a *Pax Anatolica* for religion's sake. Their God is very real to these simple villagers, unspoiled by western freethought and not troubled with the subtleties of the Schools. Watch a group of them at prayer on the quarter-deck of a Levantine steamer; the European passengers stare and the sailors hustle past, but their attention is never distracted from the leader. With eyes downcast, with hands now raised to the ears now folded, erect, kneeling, bowing to the deck, they intone the prayer, and rise dreamily as men rise from a trance. Still more impressive is the united worship offered by a line of wild men on a village green in the moonlight. Whenever and

wherever they pray the peasants are with their God as they know Him. To them He is really omnipresent and omnipotent, and for His sake they practise, one and all, certain simple virtues. Age they reverence and the chastity of women they respect; they abhor drunkenness, and through fourteen torrid hours of a Ramazân day do not eat, or drink or smoke, while at work in the fields. The Prophet's injunction of hospitality even to the infidel successfully combats fanaticism; I have slept in a mosque portico in Ramazân. Islam, by the respect it secures to age, gives every village the basis of communal government; and by the reverence that it prescribes for the successor of God's Prophet it unites, as no other force could unite, the heterogeneous elements that go to make up the Ottoman Empire.

Even those elements that are called by the common name of 'Turk' are heterogeneous. Three parts of the 'Turks' of Anatolia have no Turki forefathers, but are children of aborigines, Carians, Galatians, Phrygians, what you will, who accepted long ago the militant gospel of monotheism. Perhaps among descendants of old feudal families or in ancient monastic cloisters survive faint strains of the true Ottoman; but after so many centuries of intermarriage with Caucasian and other alien races the blood of that small military caste, which came fittest out of the chaos of the fifteenth century, must be mixed indeed. I take it that, in many instances, the 'Turk', most rightly so called, is the

despised *Yuruk*, the 'wanderer', a name applied to the half-settled population, roaming in summer among the settled, but for the most part collected in the winter into villages. Yuruks are not gipsies, who exist, distinct in type, in many parts of the same land. They do not differ in anything but their name and their unrest from many settled 'Turks'. The truth seems to be that they are the slowly-settling descendants of pure nomads who followed the Moslem conquerors at a distance; and that they have various pedigrees, many being true Turks. Little by little, as they simmer down among the long-settled aborigines, they take the name of honour, and in their turn despise those who are still Yuruks. The process of the change can be watched and is full of interest. Scattered winter huts on the hills gradually coalesce into a hill village; the summer wandering at large becomes a definite migration to an invariable locality; bit by bit even this outing becomes less obligatory and less prolonged; some Yuruks never leave the village at all; others go and come, and the place of the summer *yaila* is fixed hard by the village itself. As they become rooted the nomads part with their endogamous exclusiveness, and with those survivals of *Mutter-recht* and the like which a wandering life renders necessary. The women lose their effrontery, the men eliminate remnants of nature worship from their profession of Islam; they become agricultural as they cease to be pastoral, and insensibly they cross the divide

and public parlance proclaims them no longer *Yuruk*.

But be it noted that nomadism dies very hard and long survives settlement. The practice of migrating to a *yaila* in summer is the most infallible sign that a village of 'Turks' is not a village of converted aborigines; for *yailas* have practically no reason for existence on a high plateau where the nights are always cool—no reason sufficient, at least, to make a people, that has never been nomadic, take up its household gods. In the valley of the Saros, among the newly-settled Avshar tribes of Anti-Taurus, a village five thousand feet above sea-level, surrounded by deep grass and abundant water, will be found abandoned in summer for a valley a few hundred feet higher with less pasturage and less water; and in 1890 we actually found the peasants of Saris camping out in booths and tents not two hundred yards from their village. They protested that their house vermin drove them out; but the houses could hardly have held creeping things more innumerable than those summer tabernacles, and I make no doubt the peasants' itch was of a more deep-seated sort.

The Christians who survive on the Western Plateau are dying too. Here is no question of the Armenian, ineffaceable as the Jew, for he is neither indigenous nor numerous in the west, nor of the few Greek traders who have pioneered a bastard civilization from the coast; but of surviving communities of one blood, but not one creed, with the

aboriginal 'Turks'. Why was the Koran not forced down the throats of the Apollonian and Philomelian Christians whose children keep the faith at Olu Borlu and Permenda, near Aksheher? How comes it that there is still a Greek community at Sillé, an hour only from Konia, once the capital of Rum, and that the Turkish-speaking Christians of Cappadocia are lineal descendants of the flock of the Gregories and Basil? The Seljuk Sultans were manifestly men of more liberal minds than the Emirs who succeeded them, or the fanatic tribe of Othman. In their eyes the Greek had his value. The most beautiful of Seljuk gateways, that of the Blue School at Sivas, bears among its marble lacework and tiles, tinged by some lost art, an inscription recording that its architect was one *Καλοιωάννης*. A little community is living still on an island in the Lake of Egerdir, of which Byzantine chronicles record that it refused of its own motion, in 1142, to receive the Christian hero, John Comnenus, finding the Sultan of Konia a better master. I paid a visit to it in 1890 with a companion, who is not more likely than I to forget the voyage in a rotten coracle, loaded till its gunwale had sunk to an inch above water-level. A sea, which had come all the length of the great lake, was running abeam, and we set foot on the island with profound thankfulness, overborne presently by the thought of return. A remnant of fifty Christian families huddled at one end of the island, where was a church served by two priests. No service was

held except on the greatest festivals, and then in Turkish, for neither priest nor laity understood a word of Greek. The priests told us that the families became fewer every year; the fathers could teach their children nothing about their ancestral faith, for they knew nothing themselves; the Moslems were 'eating them up'. We had to force the church door, and brush dust and mould from a vellum service-book dated 1492. It was like nothing so much as a visit to a death-bed.

Yet Nature is no niggard in Anatolia, and has granted early springs, brilliant summers, and sure rains—a climate like that of Central Europe. The western, northern, and southern hills still bear mighty forests, and their wealth of minerals has hardly been touched since Roman days. The Levant has no better harbours than the western bays of Ionia, and there is an easy road down the Maeander for the passage of the grain from that matchless corn-land, the central Axylon plain. Cartographers write this tract a Desert, and therefore that term must include an undulating treeless plain which if scratched by a Homeric plough sends up corn breast-high. Fresh water is found everywhere at less than twenty feet, and deep grass grows in the marshy hollows through which streams creep to the central lake. When a land has not been called upon for centuries to produce, its natural fertility may be rated too high; but, all allowance made, this Axylon with its warm days and fresh nights, its open, well-watered level

and light soils, must be surely among the most desirable heritages of men.

I have seen many parts of it. Let me describe one August day on which we rode twelve hours westward from Sultan Khan, the most gorgeous of the ruined Seljuk *caravanserais* on the road from Sivas to Konia. The morning had opened ill, for Circassian highwaymen, who had dogged us from Akserai, lifted our best horse out of a general stampede shortly before sunrise. We searched for hours among the *yailas* near, but, finding no trace, had to continue westwards in no contented mood. But ill-humour could not resist long the exhilarating influence of the salt breeze blowing over the vast earth-sea which stretched a day's march behind us, and seemed limitless ahead. Eastwards the cone of an extinct volcano, Hassan Dagh, hung in mid-air like the last peak seen from ship-board, and our track could be descried for miles before us, dipping into the furrows and reappearing on ridges, clothed with a dusty scrub, under which showed sparse green leaves and grass. Presently we came on a deeper and wider hollow than ordinary, and climbed on to a Seljuk causeway laid over the marshy ground. A sun-lit mist on the plain ahead betrayed a village surrounded by threshing floors; and other clouds of golden chaff might be seen hanging here and there over isolated farms. Clear-skinned Turkmans, fan in hand, answered our queries, saying that they had come from winter-villages on the eastern hills, and that we should

pass other *yailas* of their folk on our road ; and when we had satisfied their quick counter-questions, we rode on, meeting little variety. Now and again the track would dip down a low bluff and cross a marsh or slow stream crawling between soft banks, and then go up again on to the rolling waste, pock-marked with the burrows of innumerable prairie-dogs. A hare started from time to time, and red-legged partridges scuttled away beneath the scrub. As the sun passed to the south, the contracting horizon became vague and tremulous, and a far-seen mound rose up in air with a belt of atmosphere beneath. But, for all that, the heat did not oppress, and a salt breeze still blew southwards. We halted at a little village by the mound for the midday ; the breeze was dying now, and men and beasts huddled under any shade, the flocks head down, mere clusters of twitching backs. Two hours followed for repose, and then two more in the saddle, over a plain more lifeless than before, as far as a half-hidden village built among hummocky mounds which were strewn with old stones, here a cross, there an egg-and-tooth moulding, or the defaced medallion of a saint. Its name is Aghoren, ' White Ruin ', once Savatra, a city which coined its own money and must have equalled all the modern villages of the plain taken together. We searched for inscriptions but in vain, and soon climbed again to the level, making for a line of low hillocks, marked chessboard-wise with squares of cultivation. Other two hours passed and we were

on their crest. Ahead a dark patch showed in the eye of the low red sun ; the plain began to take a purple hue, and from piebald clusters, moving towards the gaunt swing-beams of a group of wells, came the tinkling of many bells. Tracks multiplied and ran into ours, and the broad road was penned presently between the earthen fences of little irrigated fields. We were nearing Suwarek, the principal village of this part of the plains ; but the sun fell too fast for us, and we had to ride down its straggling streets in the pink dusk of the afterglow.

Three to four days' journey from east to west, eight to ten from south to north, the great level stretches, but includes not half the arable land of Anatolia. The Cappadocian Plateau, rising to the east, would bear a fortnight later as large a harvest, besides grapes, and all kind of fruit in its valleys. West lies an immense tract of hill and dale, larger again than the Axylon, and its lower levels for the most part are cleared and cultivated. Verily Anatolia is one of the gardens of the temperate earth, and perhaps some day European colonists will return from the lands of fever and fly, where their second generation hardly holds its own and the third fails, to take up this portion of their more legitimate heritage.

Who else can arrest the Anatolian death ? Not the Ottoman rejuvenated by any political alchemy.¹ His organs are wasted too far to be saved by any

¹ Written in 1895 during the worst Hamidian days. Alchemists have been at work since, and their elixir is on trial.

‘reforms’. How many reforms have we pressed upon the Sick Man, and what is to show now? What, indeed, could there be to show for the introduction of corporate responsibility where no western sense of individual responsibility exists? The forms of a civilization based on equality of all men before the law have been imposed on men who, by religion and custom immemorial, respect persons. A system, pre-supposing development and progressive adaptation, is entrusted to a people which regards human initiative in change as an insult to the Creator. Centuries of slowly widened identification of the individual with the common claim of humanity lie behind the effective working of the European machine of government. In the Ottoman East the individual is considered alone; there are no common claims of humanity.

Picture a mean, whitewashed barrack, with a long alignment of dingy panes, cracked and patched with paper. It is ten-years old, but its unlevelled precinct remains a slough in winter, a dustpit in summer. The crazy doors open on a corridor, along whose walls runs an irregular dado of grease where frowsy heads have reposed; the floor twinkles with fleas. Push aside the mat hanging before one of the little dens which open right and left, and look at the dozen men sitting on the cheap Manchester cottons of the *divan*; eleven have no business there; the twelfth, whose ‘office’ this is, is doing no more than the eleven. An occasional coffee, a more frequent cigarette, the listless fingering of

beads, make up the morning and the evening. It is the reduction of a western bureau to the absurd-est, this parade of desks and ledgers and files. Coffee-cups and ash-trays occupy the desks, and pages of the ledgers are stopping the wind from a broken pane. A memorandum is penned slantwise on the folded knee, and records are turned out on the floor from a wide-mouthed bag. In such dens as this all European travellers have had their weary experiences of Ottoman officialism; but they may reckon safely that for every hour and every piastre that they spend in getting merely a visa for a passport the poor native must spend days and pounds.

They are an evil unmixed, these semi-pauper officials, who all must live, forming a predatory class in direct contact with their prey, the peasantry. Things were better under the powerful Bureaucracy, which fell in the present reign; then there was more local knowledge at head-quarters and less harem intrigue, a greater responsibility and a truer dignity in the official. Centralization is slow death in such an Empire as the Ottoman, whose nervous system of wires and roads is not half developed, whose brain cannot adequately direct the members. In this heterogeneous loose-knit state such a system as the rule of the *aghas* a century ago is perhaps best. Those feudal lords at least were sensitive to the condition of the peasantry and were punished directly by their disorders. Justice at the city gate was done rudely, often venally, but at least done; and for what was taken something was

given, back indirectly in the shape of alms and entertainment. The great families, which could put a thousand horse in the field and sleep under their own roofs at every stage from Stambul to Baghdad, were doubtless too often brigands and foes to trade; but the Anatolian sighs with the Old Pindari :

I'd sooner be robbed by a tall man who showed me
a yard of steel,
Than be fleeced by a sneaking Baboo with a belted
knave at his heel.

Now the descendants of the *aghas* who entertained Pococke, and Chandler, and Leake have perished utterly, or lost their nobility and its obligations in official rank. Here and there an old man survives in ever-increasing poverty, still eager to welcome the stranger, to offer all his house, and serve him with his own hands; but for the feudal chieftain, who will roast whole sheep and bid godspeed with fifty horsemen at his back, one must go to the Kurds and Circassians.

The only form of government understood in the Ottoman East is immediate personal government. The introduction of an official system results merely in the multiplication of personal governors. Where the governed supported one before, now they support ten. They never complained that they should have to support the governor; they complain now that governors should be so many. What we of the West term corruption and venality means often not more to the East than a recognized

system of *aliquid pro aliquo*. Fixed stipends and centralized taxation are things not less alien to Eastern tradition than the equality of all men before Law that altereth not. The peasant feels it no hardship to pay directly for the services of the governor in proportion to his own needs or the governor's personal tariff; he likes to have visible value for his money, one year to pay nothing, the next to escape a visible prison by paying treble, and he prefers, on the whole, that his contributions should vanish into visible pockets. The one thing in the beginning of our administration of Cyprus more disliked by the Cypriotes than the regularity of our taxation was the incorruptibility of our local officials. The Oriental is a born bargainer. Where railways are new to him, as in Upper Egypt, he will offer half as much for his ticket as the booking-clerk demands, and delay the train while he chaffers for ten minutes at the window. Once I scornfully asked a Greek trader, who had been haggling over a certain bargain for a whole week and gained thereby one piastre and a half on the price first offered, at what he valued his time? 'My time!' he exclaimed, 'what else should I do with it?'

The Oriental, therefore, is probably happiest under a mildly 'corrupt' and 'oppressive' Government. His indolence prefers action that is inconstant; his gambling instinct is gratified by inconsistency; and his fatalism secures him against any very acute mental misery. A piggish contentment with its lot has been remarked by all travellers as charac-

terizing the Anatolian peasantry, notwithstanding that there may be 'corruption' abroad unbelievable except by a Russian. In 1891, at a certain centre of government, I heard that the post of Provincial Receiver, tenable for two years only, at a stipend of 70 pounds Turkish, had been assigned lately to a candidate who offered 200 as entrance fee; and that the ex-Receiver was pressing a claim for a stray sum of 800 not yet paid over to him on an official bargain. It is notorious that not one-third of the provincial credits for public works is spent on such works, and European would-be concessionaires of mining or railway undertakings make no secret of setting aside thousands out of subscribed capital for 'commission' on the desired *firman*. There is withal 'oppression' of the most arbitrary kind; forced labour on Government works with the accompaniment of the whip; quartering of police at free rations on the poorest peasantry; tax-gatherers seizing the plough-ox or the last sack of seed-corn; sudden imprisonments and long detentions until money is paid, not for release, but for the preliminary privilege of trial.

But, notwithstanding all this, there is no misery apparent in most Anatolian villages. The peasant's standard of living is not high; his wants are few, and such as earth supplies to little labour. Ordinary taxation, which he hates, is very low; extraordinary requisitions are not resented. Religion guarantees his exclusive possession of his women-folk, and a bare subsistence in any event. Not being highly

developed, he does not feel physical pain acutely, and accepts a beating at the hands of a police trooper as a schoolboy takes a flogging. The gulf between prosperity and adversity is neither deep nor wide ; the richest man of a village commonly lives in a similar house on like food and drink the same life of manual labour as the poorest ; a roof, four walls, bread, water and sexual joys are all that either craves. The luxuries of Anatolian life are its necessities, slightly more abundant.

CHAPTER IV

THE GREAT RIVER EUPHRATES

EVER since we had left Aintab the path had been falling insensibly towards a purple hollow, far seen in the east. Beyond it interminable brown uplands rolled to the horizon, and all about us stretched stony scrub. Through this we rode hour after hour at that weary foot pace which travellers in such regions know only too well. Anxiously we looked for a glint of water to left or right or before, for between us and those brown slopes ran the fourth river of Paradise; but up to midday and for two hours after noon the arid monotony continued unrelieved. The track seemed to have ceased to fall and even to be taking an upward cast again, when lo! the table-land broke abrupt, as if cut with a giant's hatchet; a sliding arc of brown water gleamed a thousand feet below us—Euphrates at last.

As we scrambled down the cliff a mighty roar rose up to meet us. The great river was in spate, sweeping round a majestic curve from the north and vanishing on a contrary curve to the south, a fuller, broader Rhine. It rushed six miles an hour between towering banks which had weathered to fantastic pinnacles, and displayed a hundred metres' breadth of turbid flood, boiling in mid-stream over sunken rocks. It is no child's play to cross it at any season,

and least of all when the snows are coming down ; but cross we must if we were to go north, for on the right bank we should encounter presently a great tributary, unfordable, and without ferry or bridge.

A single boat of strange build was moored to the bank opposite beneath the gardens of a little white town built terrace-wise up the precipice. We holloaed lustily, and one by one a crew leisurely mustered. The boat was manned, shoved off, and whirled away incontinently out of our sight down the seething current. Evidently no more would be seen of her for an hour or more, and we lunched at leisure until a knot of bare-legged Kurds hove in sight labouring at a rope's end, and we were bidden follow half a mile up stream. The boat was a primitive craft, nearly flat-bottomed and very broad in the beam, her planks nailed clinkerwise on a spare framework, abhorrent of any symmetry of shape or disposition. Square low bows admitted of the embarkation of horses, and the stern ended in a high poop and antediluvian rudder, which projected its monstrous fishtail far into the stream. No instruments of propulsion were visible except two poles, assuredly not for purposes of punting in so deep a river. Our horses had never seen a boat ; but being fortunately less imaginative than the steeds of Europe, and somewhat irresponsive to outward impressions after a fortnight on the hard high road, they came in over the bows without much ado, and were penned up head to tail with a stout

bar behind. As the tub took in her load she began to leak ominously, but the crew made little of it, plugged a seam here and there with the end of a turban-cloth, and advised us to stand as high as we could. Now we are ready. Two men seize the poles and two more the tiller, the shoreman pays out the rope, everybody shouts, and away we swing down stream, the leakage swishing across and across the horses' hoofs. The bowmen lug frantically at their bladeless poles, using them as oars and obviously with effect; the men at the rudder work its tail from side to side like a stern-oar, yelling all the while above the screams of the stallions. Round comes the tiller; down duck our heads, or they would be broken. We must hang on the gunwale like bats, our toes drawn up out of reach of the plunging hoofs. In sober fact it was all perilous enough, for many accidents have happened ere now to these crazy craft; but before we had collected ourselves to think about danger we were spinning in a back eddy and brought up with a bump against the Mesopotamian shore.

We found ourselves landed among the gardens of a tiny white town, most of whose population came down presently to inspect us on the river bank. There was a new coffee-shop with a clean upper chamber in which we were lodged; a sleepy little *bazar* where edibles were kept from year to year until eaten; and a fat Governor, who received us sitting on a low wooden stool on the roof of his house. He was a small man every way, but as over-

seer of roads or in some such capacity had been in most parts of Asiatic Turkey, and his exuberant goodwill was to be bought by any one who would trot out his geographical knowledge before the gaping Kurds. The town is new. Khalfat used to be a little village under its own chieftain in the days when a Kurdish prince ruled his feudatories from the castle of Rum Kalé, an hour distant up the stream. Above the Rhineland gorge of Khalfat lies a corner of Kurdistan; village after village is held by handsome brown-white men with narrow eyes and crisp hair curling over broad, low brows, who speak a tongue mocked by the Turks as a twittering of birds, but to our ears full of uncertain Aryan echoes. Their women crowd about the stranger unveiled, and laughing allow him to see their handsome faces and the strange devices tattooed on their forearms; but he must confine himself to an interest coldly scientific, for the men are the most jealous of any in the East, and for that reason slow to welcome a guest. We always, however, made a point of disregarding their polite protestations of inability to entertain us fitly, and found them hospitable after all when assured of our good faith.

When Von Moltke was writing his famous letters from Malatia, the Sultan's writ did not run in all this region, and the hostility of the Kurdish Beys increased mightily the difficulties of Hafiz Pasha in his vain effort to drive the army of Mehemet Ali out of Syria, and contributed to his crowning

disaster at neighbouring Nisib. But since the Crimean War all has been changed ; and the Turk's emphatic settlement of thus much of the Kurdish question in his own favour is a fact noteworthy and significant. These men about Khalfat are no longer ' fierce fighting Kurds '. In facial type and speech they group with the northern tribes, but are become already true Moslems who do not sacrifice on stone altars or set up a stone as an outward and visible sign between themselves and Mecca, as I have seen their folk do in the Taurus ; and, shades of the princes of Rum Kalé !, these children of their feudatories are reputed the most easily squeezed of all taxpayers in Ottoman Asia. The plateau, on which they have been settled this century past, is very fat ; agriculture tempted them in the day of their independence, until they came to have too much to lose, and, their feudal chiefs, vigorously handled these thirty years, have resigned, bit by bit, all their administrative functions. I take it that in such using of natural influences would lie also the only solution of the northern Kurdish question possible for the Turk. Whenever and wherever the Ottoman Government is strong enough, it must undertake wholesale deportation of the Kurdish tribes to the Plains, imitating the practice of the old Persians, and lately of ourselves in north-western Hindustan. The Turks themselves have made, indeed, a successful experiment of this high-handed sort in the region of Amanus, and now there is no Kurdish question there. A governor or

a marshal who will use vigorously the Fourth Army Corps, ignoring the Armenians and the Russians for a season, might put an end in a single strenuous campaign to the Kurdish difficulty from Erzinjian to Van. The whole history of the East is one of the peaceful development—decline, if you will—of barbarian mountaineers descended to the Plains. Assist the process, provide that the plain be out of sight of the mountain, and the most intractable brigands in less than a generation become the most tractable tillers of the soil.

By the fourth morning we had ridden across a corner of this Kurdish region and reached the river's bank again at the point where, in Strabo's time, the great Eastern road set out towards India. The treeless uplands had brought us only long blank days, with nothing to shoot and nothing to see, except here and there a brown reach of the river, flashing for a moment between low cliffs. Kurd village had succeeded to Kurd village, each with its little guard-house of the excise standing up among squat hovels, half subterranean. The same black-haired, gaudily dressed women, the same naked urchins, the same deep cornlands in the valleys, and milky streams descending from scrub-clad hills, made up the picture always. Tired of such easy travel, we hailed the ferry of Samsat, hoping for fortune more various on the right bank. A boat even more infirm and manned by a crew even less skilful than at Khalfat put us all ashore, thanking Providence, on the marshes below Samsat,

and we found a welcome in the house of Yusuf Agha, one of the very last of the Kurdish Beys in this region.

Here was patriarchal feudalism as it used to be. We were received by an old man, whose word is never questioned, and whose entry rouses every man to his feet. He dispenses hospitality, morning and night, to all comers ; no one in the little village but tends his herds, ploughs his fields, and dwells beneath his shadow ; and, with a sweet dignity befitting his dying order, he placed his house and all in it at our pleasure for two days and nights. Samosata, the key of the principal crossing of Euphrates, capital of Commagenian kings, station of a Legion, birthplace of Lucian and of Paul the heresiarch, has fallen very low. Hardly a hundred huts huddle in one corner of the old site, marked now by the line of the Roman fosse, by a ruined river wall and by gaunt fragments of rubble. A black stone with Hittite inscription, defaced even more hopelessly than other monuments of its class, lies face downwards where the flocks are milked ; two tiles of the ' Steadfast Flavian Legion XVI ' and a soldier's dedicatory altar were disinterred for us from heaps of kitchen refuse ; there are some trivial Greek inscriptions in mud-walls and in the castle-ruins—and that is all of Samosata.

But, pushing northwards up the river bank, we came on notable ruins of an aqueduct, straddling over the mouths of tributary gullies. Von Moltke had reported ancient works of defence, closing the

lateral valleys on the right bank. This aqueduct was what he saw. Its arches have been half filled with coarse masonry by later hands, but the additions make the aqueduct no more defensible than before (for it is commanded on all sides), and seem to have been intended only to strengthen the waterway. Thus, for nearly twenty miles the clearer stream of the tributary, which is now called Kiakhtha Chai, was conducted to Samosata, though the sweet waters of Euphrates ran by its very walls. What the modern peasant is content to drink was not good enough for the contemporaries of Lucian.

The Taurus, whose snowy summits had been nearing us day by day, now began to close in on the river. The stream, no longer oozing among reedy islands, as at Samsat, came foaming down rock-ladders, elbowed from side to side of its channel by the jutting cliffs. The road became a footpath, then a goat-track, and at last broke off altogether on the face of a precipice fifty feet above a tormented eddy of the river. It was an awkward moment; the horses had to be turned in their own tracks, and nothing but the stolid docility of the weary beasts saved us from disaster. We made a *détour* through the hills and came down to the river again, but it was idle to persevere in face of the assurances of the Kurds that not even a goat could go much farther; and when we reached the Kiakhtha Chai we had made up our minds to strike due north and rejoin the Great River above Malatia.

A reckless Kurd guided us across the mouth of

the Kiakhta Chai late on a stormy afternoon. The melted snows of Taurus were coming down in wild yellow eddies, and the stream ran from bank to bank a quarter of a mile wide, with here and there a shoal, and everywhere a possibility of quicksand. We plunged from shallow to deep, following what seemed the wantonness of the guide, but really his cautious avoiding of treacherous bottom; and, as we turned every now and again with the current running five miles an hour at our saddle-flaps, we seemed to be backing vainly against the flood, and lost all sense of independent motion or direction. It was a dizzy half-hour's experience, and horses and riders alike struggled out at last very thankfully on to a stationary world.

That night we lay at a Kurdish hamlet, where even a glass bottle was passed from hand to hand in silent wonder, and all the next day rode over the rising foothills towards the base of the huge pyramid of Nimrud Dagh, whereon is the sepulchral tumulus of Antiochus I of Samosata. He was a petty king, this Seleucid, who presumed to oppose for a moment the first Roman army that watered its horses in Euphrates; and in the event he had to submit swiftly and utterly, and end his days an obedient client of the great Republic, the shadow of whose coming Empire was cast already far into Asia. But in his death he is exalted above all the Great Kings, lying there on the topmost peak of a mountain, surrounded by rude effigies of his divine ancestors, whose feet are in the snow while their

faces look out over Commagene and far across Euphrates to the Mesopotamian desert.

In the wild valley below is a monument of his conquerors, hardly less stupendous. The frontier road of the Empire had to be carried over a fork of the Kiakhtha river. Perhaps, if this valley was traversed also by the royal road of the Persians (as is possible) and by the 'common road of all who go up to the East', described by Strabo, there was a still earlier bridge; but in any case the Romans built it anew, and it stands still, with hardly a stone displaced. The single arch spans one hundred and twelve feet, and the keystone is fifty-six feet above mean water-level. Three columns are erect at the ends of the balustrade, graven by the four cities of Commagene with dedications to the Emperor Septimius Severus, his wife, and his son Caracalla: the fourth column, which bore Geta's name, was removed after his murder. Four tablets and four altars, built into the balustrade, record the Emperor's restoration—a restoration of such a sort that after seventeen hundred years there is hardly a crack or a hole. Nothing could demonstrate better how the long arm of the Empire reached to its uttermost confines, than this monument in a remote Commagenian gorge; and that fine comparison of the Roman Imperial system to one of its own buildings, more costly and more painful to destroy than to construct, has no better illustration than the Kiakhtha bridge. Now the roadway serves for Kurdish goats to trot from one pasturage to another.

We were come at last to the foot of the Tauric wall. By which pass should we cross? I detected the fancied ruin of a highway going up from the bridge into the Taurus, and resolved to follow it. The Cilician muleteers struck: they had come, they said, far enough from their wives without going where their beasts would perish among the rocks, and themselves be killed by the Kurds. And did we not know that there was a 'road of peace' nearer the river? They called Heaven to witness they would go by no other. I swore they should go my way or depart unpaid, and in an evil hour there came an Armenian, saying that my road was fair going. So we started. No difficulty on the first ridge, thickly set with green arbutus and lentisk shrubs; none for us horsemen among the pines on the second, although rocks jutted awkwardly and the path narrowed to no more than six inches. But it proved a different story for the baggage-mules, lagging far behind. One was forced over the edge and rolled to the stream below, but the loads broke his fall. Twice the packs had to be unloaded, ported round an awkward corner and reloaded; and all seven muleteers were weeping and cursing by turns when they struggled up at last, two hours in arrears. It seemed worse now to go back than forward, although our 'ancient roadway' had vanished long ago; therefore we pushed on, here bracing up a mule as he rounded a sharp corner, there disentangling another from the boughs of a pine. Presently the path dipped (for

we were as yet on spurs only) into a gorge a thousand feet deep, and the caravan, having shuffled and slid somehow to the bottom, came to a halt, that the loads of the quivering beasts might be readjusted. It was as lovely a scene at that point as heart could desire ; fold on fold of dark pine forest, rolling up this side and that of a mountain torrent to a huge peak, glittering in the bluest of skies ; but, paradise or no, we could not afford to linger, and with infinite labour but no further accident climbed out of the gorge again to a camping-ground on a little patch of grass, exposed among the lowest of the melting snows. Things had not gone well, but they might have been worse ; we had made only five native hours in ten, and the night came up cruelly cold on that knife-edge five thousand feet high ; but there were pine logs in plenty to warm us, and Kurdish shepherds at hand to bring forage and milk and eggs. In the mountains the Kurdish tribes are less tame and less orthodox than in the plains, clinging to stone altars and strange crosses, and vicarious witch-dolls set up over the graves of their dead ; and very wild eyes peer from under their huge turbans built up of kerchiefs, as many, it is said, as the wearer has years. But, nevertheless, they are not really a formidable folk, but just rude shepherds and woodcutters, leading a half nomadic life, and bartering in the *bazars* of Malatia and Marash with the dwellers on the plains.

The guides spoke of trouble to come, for we were not yet at the summit, and there was still much

snow. It was now late spring, and snow in such a latitude at that season would mean rotten bridges over gullies, and soft deep holes and doubtful fords. So in fact the event was to prove. Horse after horse on the second day broke through the treacherous crust ; girths snapped, saddlebags scattered their precious contents, loads collapsed, and frightened animals kicked their way out of one hole into another. Bred in the plains, they had probably never seen snow ; and presently had to be flogged on to the smallest patch of it. Poor beasts ! they will never have a worse three hours. Now one glissaded down a snow-slope, now another nearly drowned self and rider in snow water. We seemed but to escape from one evil into a worse, until the muleteers had exhausted their vocabulary of execration and become reduced to one monotonous plaint, ‘ We are being taken into Hell ; but what can we do ? ’ But by better or worse paths, by this device and by that, we got over the watershed by noon, and struck at last a broader path below the snow-line. The forests of the southern slopes were succeeded by bare grassy shelves, presaging that treeless desolation with which travelers in central Anatolia are familiar. Not that there was really desolation as yet ; water was abundant and the herbage deep and lush, and the broader tracks, as well as frequent villages, half seen in side valleys, spoke to a population far more numerous than on the savage Commagenian side. And if the open glades through which we were

riding were monotonous enough, there were distant prospects all around of a grander character. The huge snow-streaked spine of the main chain rose still on our left hand; a billowy sea of shaggy ridges fell away on the right towards the cleft through which Euphrates was rushing unseen, and, as we emerged on to the open, a glittering saw rose on the horizon before us. In ignorance of the bearings I thought it must be Anti-Taurus, although it looked to be a range more tremendous than I remembered the Bimboa Dagħ to have seemed three years before; but it proved to be that famous Kurdish stronghold, the Dersim Dagħ, situated on the farther bank of Euphrates, over a hundred miles from the pass in which we were. That night we reached late, and slept at, a Kurdish farm within sight of the Great River again, and came in peace to Malatia on the third day.

Malatia is the half-way house from Stambul to Baghdad, but it seemed ominously still; no camel trains jangled through the streets, no waggon-tilts blocked the great courtyard of the *khan*, no *colluvies gentium* was crowding its *bazars*. The truth was soon learned; the great post-road from Stambul was closed a few hours to the north by a quarantine cordon. We had heard rumours already that cholera was in Sivas, but had not believed them, for the plague had been unknown before on the plateau of Asia Minor. And worse news was to come: a Kurdish village two hours distant from us was suspect likewise, and Malatia itself had been

declared infected for ten days. None of us had a mind for quarantine, I least of all, who had experienced five days' detention three years before. At that time cholera was in Aleppo, and my party was caught on the frontier of the province trying to go north. The soldiers forced us to camp beneath an August sun at midday on a bare hill-side without a green thing in our sight ; no fresh food could be procured for twenty-four hours, and no water better than that of a stagnant pool, in which Kurdish goats drank and buffaloes wallowed at evening and noon. A motley crowd of miserable suspects was stewing in two black tents hard by, some suffering from a colourable imitation of cholera, due to the foul water, and many long overdue to depart. Ten days was the legal term, but in the absence of any doctor who might sign clean bills of health some poor wretches had waited already for fifteen days. During the first afternoon and night we were guarded in the most approved manner, Martini to right and Martini to left ; all money was passed through vinegar, and a letter to the local Governor fumigated so thoroughly that on its receipt the official gorge must have risen. Our tobacco, however, was reported somewhat superior to the local supply, and next morning the guards foraged for us and forgot to sulphurate their own *bakshish*. On the third day we began to trade directly with the Kurds, while the cordon looked away. The fourth sunrise brought out a fat Armenian doctor ; fleas and ticks in the guard-tent gave him riotous wel-

come, and the soldiers made a point of proffering the foulest water of the pool after his long ride. He spat hastily and preferred thirst. The afternoon was passed in argument. On the morrow camp was moved to better water, and by midday, the thermometer in our tent registering 110° Fahr., the good doctor's mind became amenable to reason. As a result of various forms of reasoning we were shut on the sixth morning ten at a time into a bell-tent; through the only air-hole a pan of burning sulphur was introduced, whereupon we burst out incontinently among uprooted pegs and broken guide-ropes. The doctor signed certificates that we had kept ten days' quarantine and been disinfected thoroughly; and, that done, we resumed our way to the north, accompanied by a motley crowd, drawn from half the races of Western Asia and astride on all manner of beasts. These quarantine cordons have become an unmitigated, because ever-recurring, curse. The trade of the Syrian cities has never recovered from the restrictions of 1890 and 1891, and the Black Sea ports will not revive for ten years after 1894. While the small fish are netted the big are often allowed to pass; and infection meets with little or no impediment where commerce is throttled.

On the present occasion, however, we had neither to bribe nor to bluster, for, after three days spent in the garden-town where the Malatiotes congregate now, and two in the ruined city which they abandoned in 1838 to Hafiz Pasha's army, we

learned that there was no cordon established yet on the Arabkir road. Folding our tents swiftly and silently, we rode through the gap, and doubled warily to the bank of the river north of the fords of the Kuruchai. It was a lucky escape, for already we were tired of Malatia, of watching Armenians sell and Kurds buy in its squalid *bazars*, and receiving all conditions of men in an upper chamber of the *khan*. One visitor, indeed, had been out of the common run, an Epirote Turk, once a petty police officer of Gordon's at Khartum, and captured there by the Mahdi. He had not witnessed his master's murder, being already in bonds, which he bore for three years until, being sent up into Darfur, he made his escape on foot to Zanzibar, and came by way of Bombay and Baghdad to Malatia. We found it difficult to extract from his slow intelligence anything beyond general descriptions of the sorry state and destruction of the captured Khartum and of his own sufferings as a slave at Omdurman. He thought little of the Mahdi himself, whom he had arrested as a youth for the theft of a boat: he was 'a nothing', 'a *two-para man*'.

When we reached the Great River again it was swinging round an elbow a few miles below Chermuk, now not a ladder of tumultuous rapids, but a full even flood, half a mile from bank to bank. A few shaggy islands broke the stream, and from one to another a naked Kurd was navigating on a distended goat-hide. He halted to readjust his

float on the shingly shore of an islet, tied up the leg-holes more tightly, and then, slipping a loop of hide over his head, waded staggering into the strong current. As the water came above his knees he sprawled forwards on the belly of the float, and pushing off with his feet was soon no more than a black speck on the yellow sea. The Kurds carry their grain in this fashion to down-river markets, drifting breast-high in the flood by day and sleeping at night on a shelving beach.

Above Chermuk the scene becomes mountainous again, and the river curves in craggy meanders. Halting at a dizzy height above, we saw again to the north that white saw which we had spied from the Taurus. The famous or infamous Dersim is the huge *massif* which divides the fork of Euphrates and harbours the most defiant rebels in Turkey—the true Carduchi of Xenophon, an old race, which obeys none but its own tribal chiefs and worships still an unknown God, who is not the God of Islam. The Turks have surrounded them with a ring of forts from Kharput to Erzinjan, but have not succeeded in breaking their stubborn backs. Their tremendous stronghold is entered from the north by defiles more than nine thousand feet above sea-level, and the Kurds reck little of the Fourth Army Corps, whose bugles they can hear across the plain of Erzinjan. In the autumn of 1893 an attempt was made by a colonel with three officers and two hundred rank and file to collect arrears of dues from the outskirts of the Dersim. The

wretched soldiers, without efficient commissariat and clad for the plains, were guided from pass to pass, broken with hunger and cold. At the last the Kurds gathered on the cliffs of a narrow gorge with their long rifles and poised rocks and began the work of death, and no man of the detachment, officer or private, ever returned to Erzinjan.

Our road was not to lie among these mountains, but on the bank opposite to that to which their foot-hills fall, through villages of Armenians and 'Turks', the latter long settled, peaceable, and prosperous. There is not a trace of nomadism in all this region; the 'Turks' are settled agriculturists, who do not flit in summer to a *yaila*, and their facial type is indistinguishable from the Armenian. Indeed, they are doubtless originally of the same blood—a converted population remaining throughout Armenia among those that have kept the faith. Such 'Turks' are found all round the elbow of the Eastern Euphrates; about Divrik their villages alternate with Christian, but above Pingan on the right bank they cluster more thickly together. 'Turks' form almost the whole population of Kemakh and a moiety of that of Erzinjan; and the same thin-featured, white-skinned type is found everywhere northwards until merged in the Georgian physiognomy of the Lazis. I cannot speak for Eastern Turkish Armenia, the region of Van, Bitlis, Mazgird, and Erzerum, but would dare wager that there too, wherever a rooted Moslem population, calling itself 'Turk', exists among the

Christians and the various tribes of Kurds, it is mainly of Armenian stock.

An hour above the strait of Keban Maden, where the stream is pent between cliffs not two hundred yards asunder, the two main waters which make the Great River come together from north and east. We followed up the northern stream, which in all times has been the true Euphrates and is still called by the name of the united stream, Murad. Halved though it was, the Murad appeared still a great river. As we ascended its course the red-brown waters came boiling out of ever-deepening gorges; the last buttresses of the Dersim begin to push their roots into it on the east and the foot-hills of Sarichichek Dagħ to close on the west, until immediately below and above Egin rock-walls rise sheer out of the stream a thousand feet. A road has been blasted and embanked (and must be re-blasted and re-embanked every summer) along the water's edge below the town; but above the point where the first bridges are no goat could pass, and travellers by all roads to Divrik on the west, or Pingan and Kemakh on the east, must labour over lofty passes with here and there a dizzy glimpse of a reach of Euphrates glimmering two or three thousand feet below. When we had turned the elbow and set our faces towards Erzinjian we found the hills fall back a little on both banks, and now, instead of being prisoned in well-like gorges, we could see over the nearer heights to the peaks and glaciers of Dersim.

During the six days' ride from Pingan to Erzincjan we enjoyed the grandest of panoramas. Sometimes by our side, sometimes far below, when we had to take to the hills, foamed rapid after rapid of the Great River. Beyond it lay a strip of green coast, and then a wall of hills with dark patches in the ravines, where Armenian villages and gardens marked the course of some mountain stream. These hills became treeless and naked ere they shot up into a rampart of black rock-needles and white domes, broken by blacker clefts and blue glacier hollows. It is a tremendous mountain mass, this Kurdish stronghold, which has cost the Ottoman Government so much and will cost it more, and the Kurds need assist Nature but very little to close it against all comers—south, north, east or west. Indeed, in all this titanic region of the upper Euphrates Nature has never been modified much by Art. In recent times, indeed, some attempts have been made at road construction. The maps with which we were supplied showed *chaussées* in the valleys, crossing the river at Keban Maden and bisecting the Der-sim; but in reality between Malatia and Erzerum no wheel has passed as yet. There are short lengths of roadway here and there—for instance, between Arabkir and Keban Maden, or for a dozen miles east of Egin, or in and around Erzincjan; but except near the latter town, where the roads are kept in order to serve the needs of the Fourth Army Corps, the embankments and cuttings are returning fast to their first state. No ruts cut the macadam,

for there are no wheels within a hundred miles ; pack animals take the shorter cuts they took of old ; and the engineers' abortive creation is left to be seamed by the tremendous rains, cracked by the sun and pared away by the bitter frosts, as winters follow summers.

In ancient days also Nature seems to have been as little assisted ; for we failed to find any important Roman works on the right bank of the Great River, which was recognized as the frontier of the Empire, and held against all the East for nearly seven centuries. A long list of frontier guards is recorded in the *Notitia Dignitatum* of the fifth century A.D., under the command of the 'most illustrious the Duke of Armenia'—legions at Trebizond, Satala, and Melitene, and a host of auxiliaries, horse and foot, some of whose regimental names reveal that their forefathers had been once free men in Gaul, and Germany, and Switzerland. Three years before this I had found a great military *chaussée*, roadway, milestones and all, connecting Melitene with the interior, and was looking to find another as great and as prolific in records of its own history on the line of the river itself. But we found never a milestone, save one only near Melitene on the road which ran inland to Sebastea. Here and there, once just above the meeting of the two forks of Euphrates, again a few miles north of Egin, again at Ashuk, occurred short stretches of paved road, very rough and ill-laid and little like Roman work ; twice we were guided to ruined bridges, one

over the Angu Chai, which was without inscription but unmistakably Roman, if judged by the finely squared masonry at the spring of its single arch. The other, over the Kara Budak above Pingan, remained only in the rubble core of its abutments; but on the rock above was a sunken panel recording in bold Latin lettering that the bridge was built in the time of the Emperor Decius across the river Sabrina—an Armenian Severn. As for legionary camps, little enough remains of that of the Sixteenth at Samosata, and we found less even at Melitene, not even a tile of the famous 'Thundering' LEGIO XII. At Satala fortune was kinder, for the ground-plan of the wall with its square towers remains on the north and east, and in the modern hamlet of Sadagh were preserved half a dozen tiles of LEGIO XV APOLLINARIS. But at Trebizond we could hear of nothing; and out of all the intermediate forts saw uncertain traces of only two—one, utterly ruined, on a high artificial mound near Korpanik and not far from the fork, and another, better preserved, built of polygonal masonry on a low eminence above Pingan, at the meeting of two small streams a mile away from the river.

The truth must be that there was little need of elaborate work where Nature had fixed such a tremendous frontier-line. The Great River is never fordable below the junction of its main confluent, while above that point the Dersim hangs over all the left bank, as impervious in the time of Xenophon

as now. No large army could come from the far East through those fearful passes, and in the days of her strength the Roman Empire treated mere mountain tribes, whether Scots, or Armenians, or Carduchi, with a like easy contempt, drawing a furrow to be passed at peril, but constructing no scientific defences. In the wild valley of Euphrates, so little inhabited then and now, great works, if built, would survive to be seen still; where such there actually were (the Kiakhta bridge, south of Taurus, is an example), they have hardly changed in eighteen hundred years. But there was little need of them; it was too hard to cross that frontier in the face of even the weakest of garrisoned posts; and the vague rebellious sentiment of the East could only picture the way of its kings prepared against Rome when an angel had poured out his vial on the great river Euphrates and the waters thereof were dried up utterly.

We had found nothing very ancient in Egin. It was probably a mere village or less before the Armenian migration of the eleventh century A.D., and was increased by refugees because of its inaccessible situation. Many 'Turks' have settled there now, and the professors of the two creeds balance one another, each holding half of a theatre of rocks, which opens on the right bank of the river, and can be entered only by most difficult paths from behind. The streets are slippery ladders, and the roof of one house is a courtyard for the one above; *bazars*, houses, gardens, are huddled together with little

fresh air and less light—for the winter sun shines into the bay for only two or three hours; and the great spring at the top of the town which sends three cascades roaring to the river, fills the atmosphere with spray and the damp exhalations of thousands of trees. The air felt cholera-laden. Indeed, long afterwards, we learned that the place had been suspect while we were there, and that we ought to have been detained; but an Englishman is held to be a focus of seditious talk in Armenian towns, and so it came about that, orders from Sivas notwithstanding, we were bidden godspeed by the authorities with much goodwill on the third day, and rode rejoicing over the wooden bridge and up and down wild hills of evil repute for Kurdish robberies, till at evening we reached the river again, coming from east to Pingan.

A spectacle had been presented to us in Egin very rare in provincial Turkey—that of a Moslem of high rank become a habitual drunkard. He had been Governor of the place, and, being suspected of a horrible crime of lust and murder, was living under guard in his own house until advices should arrive from Stambul. He insisted, it seems, on being allowed to call upon us, and came at night shuffling between two policemen. We were ignorant of his foul repute but could not mistake his condition, and endured his presence with a very ill grace. Having been in the West, he seemed to have lost all the virtues of Islam, and to care to talk only of the vices of Paris; and for two mortal hours his offensive

iteration continued, until the patience of ourselves and his guards could endure no more, and he was led back to his place. Such a specimen of a drunken official is almost singular in my experience. I can recall only a renegade Greek, who, being sent to Gyuksun (Cocusus), consoled himself in that scene of St. John Chrysostom's exile with unlimited strong waters. I have suffered many things at the hands of Ottoman provincial Governors, and more perhaps than I know ; but still I will maintain that, taken one with another, their personalities have been singularly superior to the system they administer. I have encountered not a few who were venal, some who were fanatical and cruel, and many who were stupid, but very few who shirked their work and fewer who were weak. And, all things considered, their courtesy to a European is conspicuous, both when he is armed with special permits and when bearing only the ordinary passport. They might well behave otherwise ; their interest in keeping the Christian at arm's length is real enough, for they belong to a dying race, as they themselves profess sometimes with pathetic hopelessness. Every sleeper of every railway means a Christian advance ; every advance means the retreat of Islam. The map-making, note-recording visitor from the West is the herald of a light in which these Turks will wither one day, and a visitor, knowing that they know this, can hardly resent the few annoyances, delays, and failures, for which directly they are responsible.

Divrik, on which we dropped from the mountain opposite Pingan, was Tephriké, the final home of 'Paulicianism'—strange heresy, blending Eastern dualism with the Trinity, which first caused Christians to wage holy war on one another. But Paulicianism came too late in times too troublous to leave memorials of itself on rocks and stones, and we were not surprised to find nothing in Divrik, except the lowest courses of its castle walls, earlier than the magnificent Seljuk mosque built for Khaikhosru II. Like most Seljuk buildings, this mosque is conspicuous mainly for its portals, here decorated with deeply-carved floral ornament more flamboyant than the work of the Konia Sultans in Sivas, Karaman, Sultan Khan, or their own capital. On the side of the north-eastern portal is carved the twin-headed eagle, which was a Seljuk emblem before it reached Europe, and apparently a Cappadocian Hittite symbol far earlier still, since it is displayed on the rocks of Boghazkoï, and the flank of a human-headed lion at Eyuk. The mosque has fallen into disuse, but is famous still in all Anatolia for a 'magic ball', really a globe of Persian porcelain suspended under a cupola, and interesting chiefly because in its sanctity survives a last tradition of the mysteries of Paulicianism.

Once more we found ourselves in an infected district, but having come into it without seeing any cordon we hoped to go out equally unchallenged. We chose a little-frequented path low down near Euphrates, and were not disappointed. Perhaps

the storm which swamped our camp on the third night drove the patrols to shelter, and certainly a second storm, which gathered all the fourth morning and broke right over us in the afternoon, made pursuit, had any been proposed, impossible. We barely succeeded in reaching the bridge of Kemakh that evening, and camp and baggage had to stay all night on the farther bank of a rivulet, now swollen to a fierce flood, twenty feet from bank to bank. A sorry night spent in wet clothes in a miserable room of a miserable *khan* was followed by a sorry day passed in desiccation, and enlivened for three of the party by arrest on the Castle rock. Isolated and perpendicular on all four sides, this rock of Kemakh is the strongest natural fortress I have ever seen; but as it bears no sort of modern fortification, but only the ruinous walls and fallen buildings of the Byzantine Kamakha-Theodosiopolis, our artist sat down to sketch with an easy conscience. An Armenian, who had proffered his services as guide, whistled promptly. With equal promptitude policemen appeared from all sides, and, seizing sketch-book and paint-box, hustled the three Franks down to their *khan* and set a sentry at the door. Then, flushed with success, the leader came down to the Governor only to find me, all unconscious, in the very act of showing our special permits from Stambul—papers, be it observed, of an importance rare in this remote town. I noticed some confusion and a sudden access of politeness, but nothing was said of the arrests, and, taking

leave in due course, I returned to the *khan*, there to find three irate companions. It appeared that the sentry had vanished a few minutes earlier and the ring of watching policemen melted away; and, not being molested again, we swallowed the insult for fear of being asked too closely how and where we had passed the cordon, supposed to be closing all roads from Divrik.

Next morning we repassed the bridge. Beneath it Euphrates was whirling a tormented scum of sheaves and tree-trunks and other spoils of its flood, for which naked peasants were fishing waist-deep in the red waters. Two easy days' ride, always along the Euphrates' bank, with the same stupendous prospect of snow and black crags beyond the river, brought us to Erzinjian, lying back from the river in a triangle of rich plain. The sound of many bugles smote familiarly on our ears, and the sight of white-washed barracks and trim alignments of tents was pleasant to eyes long used to mud-hovels and pine-log shelters. The Fourth Army Corps has its station here. It is the best-armed and organized in the Ottoman army, designed to co-operate with the garrison of Erzerum as a first line of opposition to a Russian advance. They certainly looked a formidable force to reckon with, these well-clad, well-fed soldiers, who filled every street and all the *bazar*, and hustled about us asking if we were Russians; and they have work enough to do with other foes than the 'Moscov', for we barely saved our horses from being requisitioned to help convey

a battalion despatched in hot haste to the foot of the mountains, whence serious trouble was reported, the result of the immunity which the Kurds had enjoyed since the massacre described above. And this, it seems, was the outward and visible beginning of the now famous affair of Sassun.

After we had left Erzinjian the Great River was seen for the last time in a distant prospect from the lofty pass of Sipikor, whence waters flow this way and that to the Indian Ocean and the Black Sea. Erzinjian was hidden by the foot-hills, but on the farther side of its plain Euphrates glistened as a winding silver thread, beyond which snows could be seen piled on snows up to a horizon black with storm clouds. Across the line of our road ahead lay long ridges like billows of a broken sea, but less tremendous than those of the region through which we had come, and the head-waters of the Lycus ran away from our feet into a green valley of cornfields. As this pass of Sipikor is the boundary of the maritime province, we were free at last from fear of being turned back and from all risk of quarantine, of which latest threats had been uttered by the military authorities at Erzinjian; and with our faces turned to the north we felt a little of the sense of escape which made Xenophon's weary Greeks raise their shout from a point a little further north on this same road. Nevertheless, we were all more than a little sorry to travel no longer by the side of Euphrates. The ceaseless motion of water exercises in common with other things inanimate but not

inert, such as wind and flame, a strangely stimulating effect on the imagination. Savages have worshipped them in all ages, and poets been subject to their influence ; and we, neither savages nor poets, were conscious that for some reason, half understood, no march during the past two months had ever been weary so long as it led us within sight and sound of the Great River.

CHAPTER V

INTERLUDES

IN the spring of 1897, when, as Director-designate of the British School at Athens, I called there on the way from Egypt, I found the representative¹ of a great British journal in a difficulty. His hard task was to gather news of several Balkan states, which one and all seemed determined to set about making history at the same moment. Crete was already ablaze; a Macedonian war was promised by Greece, and Bulgaria moved restlessly behind her frontier. Who knew what others would hazard on flank and rear? I could speak fair Greek. Would I help him by undertaking Crete? It need not be for long. The Powers would soon make its peace, and deport the Greek soldiers who had just landed under the very guns of our ships. His actual correspondent, a Greek, was colouring his despatches to London white and blue. Would I replace him awhile? My temptation was brief. I had never been in Crete, and a scholar rarely may watch war.

I had not long to wait for it. As we drew to our anchorage inside the warships lying off Canea there were houses to be seen afire two miles inshore, and rifles were spitting up and down the slopes behind the town. The Turks had thought to revictual

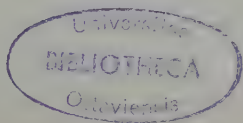
¹ The late J. D. Bourchier.

in peace their threatened lines during the hour of the Sunday office ; but priests and people came out of church to fight. It was a small and desultory affair, from which less than a score of killed and wounded men were borne back at evening to the gates—patient Anatolian peasants for the most part, serving beyond their due time who had fought without heat or reasoning why. Along with them came the corpses of two or three *bashibazuk* Cretans, Greek in feature and Greek in speech, Moslems by chance and all but ignorant of the faith which they had died to uphold. They were the first men slain in anger that I had seen.

I was to know Canea well in coming years ; but that morning it looked very strange, with its mediaeval ways darkly shuttered and patrolled by smart marines of half a dozen nations and by slouching, thick-set Turks. The day might have been the morrow of a sack, so silent and desolate were the shops and houses about the quays, and so ruinous the inner streets. An incendiary fire in the Christian quarter had been subdued only a day or two before, and the oil vats in the basements still smoked and stank. To this day, when I smell burning oil, I see Canea as I saw it first. As we ran up the harbour, the blackened shell of the Ottoman *Konak* on the heights to the left prepared us for what we were to see in the town. Our blue-jackets and marines, we were told, had saved a part of the block, less with than despite the help of the frenzied Turks, among whom a certain grey-

bearded Pasha had showed such erratic energy with a leaky hose, that it became necessary for our drenched marines to stay his zeal. Their commander called up his most respectable sergeant, and, pointing out the old gentleman as a person of consequence, bade his man wait a chance to withdraw the hose without offence. The sergeant saluted, wheeled, marched straight on the offender, and tapping him on the shoulder, remarked, with a genial but unprintable term of endearment and an even less printable counsel, that none of his sort was wanted there, and left him agape with empty dripping hands.

Canea was no pleasant abode at that moment. All inns, cookshops and coffee-houses, except the meanest, were burned or barred, and no cook or body-servant was for hire. The consuls, smoked out of Halépa a few days before, had broken into a deserted inn on the quayside, where their wives were setting before them such victuals as could be begged from the fleet. The journalists, who landed from every passing boat, lodged where and how men might in a ravished town, and a famous limner of battles kept life in him for the first few days with little but cauliflowers, oranges, and Greek brandy. Mine was a better fate. An old acquaintance of Cyprus days was commanding the Albanian police, and I found lodgment with him in the only tenanted house outside the walls, except one. In this last Cherm-side also lived, who, like my host, sustained the British name for cool courage and



quiet discharge of duty in those unquiet weeks. He showed me the lie of the land, talking of things Turkish as few men may talk, and franked me through the inner lines, where we found shoeless gunners, with rags bound on feet and legs, stedfastly serving antique field-pieces with the slouch of woodmen who handle ox-carts on Anatolian hills.

The outposts lay fiercely beleaguered on a ridge further south, under the Sphakian summits—that dazzling background to the Venetian quadrilateral of Canea, which one sees from the sea like an embastioned city in a mediaeval illumination. Hapless outposts ! They were the cause of all the bickerings between admirals and insurgents which it was to be my lot for three weeks to record. The Turks, too few to hold the outer lines in force, were not suffered by the Admirals to withdraw their pickets, lest the rebels, once on the crests, should shell the ships and the town. Yet no admiral would land his own men to support the defence and so lessen his fighting strength in the face of a faithful ally anchored alongside. So together and singly the leaders of the Powers held endless converse with bearded giants in brodered coats, and black-hatted men in sponge-bag suitings, who dubbed themselves captains and chiefs, and answered in halting French for the respect of the line ; and Admirals vowed, in even less intelligible French, to shoot if the promises were broken. And broken they ever were, and once and again the Admirals shot, and Attic journals with inflamma-

tory headlines, ' Anti-Navarino ', or ' England massacres Christendom ', egged on mobs to hoot the nameboard on the Grande Bretagne Hotel, and demand that the sanctuary of Hellenism on the Acropolis be closed for ever to the Barbarians of the West. Nor was Athens less than right according to her lights. True enough, it was we who led the shooting, and we who did almost all the blockading in Crete, for no other reason than that our gunners could shoot and our coal bunkers were kept full, and our crews did not mutiny for shore-leave where it could not be granted, and we alone had on the spot many war-craft of light draught and high speed.

But those bombardments ought never to have been necessary. With a few European bluejackets on guard at each blockhouse, the lines would never have been molested at all. The Admirals should have known Greeks better than to trust such vicarious parole as was given by caps and black hats, whether these were on the heads of chiefs or no. No Greek may answer surely for any other Greek, since individualism and intolerance of discipline are in the blood of the race. In the stormy history of Levantine religious warfare you may note one unvaried law of consequence. Where the Moslem has prevailed, the votaries of the two creeds have resumed peaceful life as of old, the Christian knowing that Moslems act under orders as one man, and that when Islam is triumphant its Gibeonites are secure of their lives. But if Christians gain their freedom, the Moslem leaves the land

of his birth. Whatever pledges the new authorities may give, he knows for his part that, since Eastern Christianity supplies no social discipline, each Christian will act on occasion as seems best in his own eyes.

I had been in Canea three days when trouble arose in the town itself. Bairam was near, and a hundred and a half armed Albanian policemen, commanded for the nonce by my host and an Arnaut colonel, had been begging during some days, as their yearly custom was, an advance of ready money for the feast. But the Turkish Treasury was empty, and the Powers supplied no funds. Put off, therefore, with vague answers to a demand which was no worse than fair, seeing they had touched no pay for months, some of the Albanians left their duty, and, rifle in hand, beset their commander with ever louder clamour for arrears. It is no British way to yield to threats. Weapons, they were told, must first be laid down, and then that should be done which could be. But Albanians part hardly with their arms, and they had often been deceived. Force must be used.

With another journalist I was warned privily that at a certain hour the Albanians would be surrounded in their barrack by European marines, who, however, were not to shoot. Should the Albanians still refuse to be disarmed, they would be charged with the bayonet. So to the barracks a little before the appointed time we two went, and posted ourselves on the stairway at the end of the

large entrance hall behind the squatting Albanians, who watched curiously one squad of marines after another deploy into the courtyard, as for some review. Presently all was ready. The officers appeared from the guardroom, and once more bade the Albanians give up their arms. The men jumped to their feet, and a voice shouted in Turkish, *Verma!*—‘Give not!’ A squad of marines with fixed bayonets advanced to the door—nervous Italians, to whom the seniority of their Admiral secured pride of place. Two or three Albanians fired at sight, and hit an Italian with two balls. Instantly, all orders to charge forgotten, the whole Italian squad blazed point blank into the hall. We were standing two or three steps above the mass of the mutineers, and the rifles threw high. I was conscious all in a moment of jets of puffed flame, of shimmering blue blades, of a bullet humming by my ear, of a long scar ripped suddenly in the wall plaster at my side, of a big Albanian writhing at the stairfoot; and then we two noncombatants were skipping up the steps, taking three at a stride.

On the upper floor, where the temporary offices of government were, we found Armenian clerks frantically upsetting tables and bureaus, and pushing them against doors. Rifles still barked below, and we thought for an instant of dropping from a window; but suddenly all firing ceased. Forcing our way back to the stairhead through a distracted crowd, which prayed us to say what was coming, we listened a moment, and then gingerly stepped

down, I for one sore afraid of seeming afraid. In the hall all was very still. The cowed Albanians were flattening themselves against the walls, as though they would pass through the solid stones; a sound of groaning came from a barrack-room on the left, where two figures lay motionless in the middle of the floor. The Italians still fidgetted outside, with rifles levelled through windows and doorways, ready to fire. I walked out as slowly as I thought decent, and turning the flank of the Italian squad, went across to our own Marines, who were in fighting formation, the front rank on the knee. 'Better out o' that, old man,' called out a private. 'What's their bag?' said a boy with a sword. I told him as well as I knew. 'Pretty poor!' he grumbled. 'Those fellows can't shoot for nuts!'

The leading squad got the word, entered at the charge, and met no resistance. I followed, and found that the loyal Albanian colonel had been shot twice, and, by his own men, it was said. He held out only a few minutes more. The Albanians' arms were passed outside; the mutineers, if mutineers they should be called, were marshalled into one room; and, as all seemed over except the caring for the wounded, the laying out of dead, and the arresting of ringleaders, I went off to the telegraph office, meeting belated and raging colleagues at every few yards, and wrote a despatch for London with not too firm a hand.

A wrangle ensued over the disposal of the

prisoners. My host, who held his temporary commission from the Sultan, stood out for a word from Constantinople before he would hand them over to the Powers; but the Admirals overruled him. I went to see the men tied up and marched to the boats. Some of them, who knew me by sight as one who understood a little of their speech, appealed to me, asking what their crime had been. Indeed, I could not exactly say. They had asked, after their customary manner, for bread due to them, and been given lead. I liked the business little, and I knew my host, who held by his men as they held by him, liked it less. He had stipulated there should be no shooting by the marines (nor would there have been had the leading squad been men of our own corps), and the death of a friend, the Albanian colonel, lay heavy on his soul.

The Turkish soldiery and the *bashibazuk* Cretans were reported enraged by the killing of the Sultan's men, and a vendetta by the Albanian remnant was feared. My host thought it better to stay at his post in the town, and I had to pass the night of the mutiny without him in the lonely house without the walls. A howling storm dashed rain on the windows. The Greek cook, forecasting a dismal fate for himself and all his kind on the morrow, lifted up his voice and wept. I lay in my clothes, listening for shots, and hearing them now and then, probably in the hills. Once and again I braved the rain and looked out from the roof to the dark town and the beams of searchlights wheeling from Suda

Bay to the crests of the hills ; and the dismal dawn came none too soon.

Little else broke the monotony of life in Canea. The rescue of the beleagured Moslems of Kandanos by a landing party of all tongues had been worth seeing, if one could have got there. But the ships slipped away round the island by night, leaving journalists in the lurch and nothing in the harbour that steamed, except a little Greek tug. We all bargained for her ; but one rose in the night while his colleagues slept, and embarked on her alone. Savage was the joy on the quay when some hours later she was espied steaming back, having failed to make headway against a south-west gale, and succeeded in making her passenger sorely sick. Only one consul saw the affair. Like all the rest Biliotti was given at dead of night two hours' warning of the sailing of the ships. His colleagues went sleepily to the telegraph office and blocked the wires with demands for instruction from ambassadors, who were snug abed in Pera ; but Biliotti, asking no man's leave, stepped into his consular boat, and had the conduct of all negotiations at Kandanos. The action was of a piece with everything he did. No more fearless or self-reliant servant of Britain ever lived than this son of the Levant, who had no drop of British blood in his veins.

For the rest the daily round was full of rather common tasks—of eternal *quid nunc* ? of lobbying, of begging crumbs from official tables. The fame

of the great newspaper which I served gained me the best consideration that consuls and commanders afloat and ashore will show to a journalist; and also I was so fortunate as to be known privately to more than one of those in power. But they grew almost as weary of my constant calls as I, and if they were often irritable and always reticent, who can blame them? Least of all do I blame the commanders at sea, who had to rock at anchor month in and month out, with nothing to do ashore, and crews cramped, confined, and murmuring for lack of leave. The Cretan Moslems were too jealous of their women for bluejackets to be let loose, and more than one French crew went to the verge of mutiny. Later on, when Latin troops came to be quartered in Canea, things reached such a pass that it was thought well to send oversea for a bunch of less forbidden fruit. It came in charge of a portly dame. But the Turk, who was still in nominal command of the port, refused in the name of Islam to admit these earthy houris; and the Great Christian Powers, by their representatives assembled, invoked the Concert of Europe to secure the landing of four Levantine light o' loves.

My fellow-journalists were for the most part a genial crew; they looked on the wine when it was red, or indeed of any other hue, and took life as it came. A few were tiros like myself; the others had seen many campaigns and much of the habitable world, where they had learned by the way, a little of most men and tongues. But I found that

almost all had tried other callings, and taken at the last to their actual trade, less in love of it than in disgust of all others. Our common talk was of warriors and war, when it was not of our despatches and their effect on the civilized world. In this company one was taken at the value one set upon oneself, and all was held fair that might serve the interest of a master at the other end of a wire.

When all the Moslems were collected under the guns of the ships, and the Christians held willy nilly to truce, there was less than ever for us all to do. The eyes of Europe had already turned from Crete to Thessaly, and before March was half spent almost all my colleagues were gone to Greece. I followed them late in the month, and, halting at Athens again, was over-persuaded to resume my service on the Greek frontier. But it could not be for long. I had laid plans with a fellow antiquary to go to Lycia, and the fair season for a southerly coast would soon be on the wane.

I took to myself, therefore, a helper, whom I had met at Athens eager for the front, and we went up together to Thessaly with all speed. At Volo we found good cheer and great clamour for war, and in every open space Reservists marshalled, who, if ever they had known soldier craft, had forgotten it. At Velestino, too, all was fair, and men gathered thick about us with cheers for England, who, as report said, had just checkmated a German plan to blockade Piraeus. But before we sighted the minarets of Lárissa (it is the one Greek town whose

mean outline is still ennobled by their slender dignity), a northerly gale swept down, and rain began. Chilled to the bone and spattered with filth of unpaved streets, we came to the only hotel to find no lying room, even in a passage way. Our servant went out to seek some decent lodging, but in vain; and just at dark we took refuge in a wretched peasants' inn, where two soldiers were bribed to set free a single room for the three of us. Bugs were making their laboured but hopeful way over the floor towards the beds; and, lifting the coverlets, we found myriads already gathered in clusters on the mattresses. But if they waited there, they were cheated; for we spread sheets of rubber, knowing their distaste of its smell, and veiling our faces and hands, lay on the floor in our clothes. In the morning a Larissean, fearful who might be billeted on him, was glad to offer us a house far from soldiers' quarters, and we made ourselves comfortable enough in two empty but wholesome rooms.

There were some sixteen thousand soldiers in Larissa at that time, and during a fortnight I saw no man drunk and no common woman plying for hire. It was the Greek warrior's simple joy to stroll the streets, his little finger locked in a comrade's, and to sing in not unmusical harmony. Yet if he was a peaceable soldier, he was a lawless one. Once I heard a colonel reprove a strolling group which would have passed him without any gesture of salute. 'Who are we to do such things?' said one,

as the group moved on. When a battalion was being inspected before marching to the front, I watched man after man break rank to chat at ease with the bystanders, while the general was passing down the lines, and heard them laugh at his reproof. *Peitharcheia*, discipline—what is that to a free-born Greek, whose birthright is to think for himself, and for you? It is said that the officer who, some weeks later, was ordered to blow up the Peneius bridge behind the retreating army exclaimed, ‘Am I a Vandal?’; and the Turks found the bridge unhurt.

All here cried, ‘To Constantinople!’ and mingled mutiny with their prayers. The King, they said, would not declare war because his Russian Queen had been forbidden by the Tsar. But if he would not, the voluntaries would. All southern Macedonia was waiting a sign to fall on the Turks, and in the space of a night the way would be clear to Salonica and beyond. If we went up to the outposts we should see in what heart were the Greeks and in what fear the Turks.

So on the second day we set out for the Malúna pass above Ellassóna. At Tírnovo the carriage seemed already to have passed out of Greece, so Turkish looked the little town with its shaded bazar and mosques and baths. At Ligária, where some two hundred kilted men were dancing in the morning sun and chanting war-songs before their tents, we were set on Hungarian cavalry horses, and escorted up the pass, with Olympus swelling

grandly on the right. Two blockhouses and two batteries faced each other on the summit, and far below lay Turkish Ellassóna, a dark patch within a white ring of tents. The officers (one red bearded, unlike a Greek), who had been watching this ring grow wider day by day, held more sober talk than we had heard in Larissa. 'They are many more than we,' said they, 'and our beginning will perhaps be hard.' 'But,' added the younger of the two, who was sweeping the Haliacmon valley with his glasses, 'all there are waiting to join us, and the end will be quick.'

I asked a safe conduct to the Turkish blockhouse, and was passed over the line. Two journalistic colleagues, or rivals, of whom we had heard nothing since their better-horsed carriage had overtaken us before Tírnovo, proved to be seated already in the little room, and plying the Albanian major with questions through a Greek interpreter. The latest comer is ever most honoured by Eastern courtesy, and at sight of me the major made room on the divan at his side. I seated myself, and greeted him in my sorry Turkish. Overjoyed to be done with Greek, the Albanian lapsed into his proper military speech, and sent for coffee. But the others took it ill, growled that we were now too many, swung out of the hut, and, when my visit was over, took me to task for having come between them and their news. Meanwhile the major had fenced with my inquiries about the Ellassóna troops, and I had parried his about the muzzling of Moslems in Crete,

and we parted as good friends as we had met, and about as wise. The officers of the kilted men at Ligária invited us to their midday meal, where was not overmuch to eat, but plenty of rough wine and the cheerful company of some French journalists, halting on their way to the crest. King George's health was drunk 'if he allows us to make war', and then that of 'all Powers who love Greece'. Great Britain was the favourite of the hour, and the proposer of the toast breathed a fervent hope that 'English guns were hungering for Russian meat'. As a Briton who spoke Greek I was put up to reply, and I trust that I bore the French love of Russia in mind; but I cannot say now what exactly may have passed, and have only a confused memory of driving away amid cheers, and becoming very drowsy on the Larissa road.

It remained to see how the case stood at the western end of the Cambunian lines; and on the following day we were trundling over the road to Tríkkala, with blockhouses, now Greek, now Turkish, always in sight on the crests to north. Except for a tedious ferry over Peneius and a noon-tide halt at the *khan* of Zarkos, near the scene of the only stout stand that the Greeks would make on the frontier in the weeks to come, there was nothing to vary the monotony of a long drive between low hills and marshy plain. But the prospect of Pindus, one unbroken wall of snow, relieved the last hours. Tríkkala, with its spacious square and imposing houses, promised better quar-

ters than eventually we found in a tiny, dubious chamber, and we chose to pass much of our night in talking to one Greek officer or another. The five thousand men who were waiting here showed less rawness in their mien than the army of Larissa, and seemed better equipped for a coming war ; but an officer anticipated all criticism by saying that Greece had no use for regulars. 'She was freed by guerilla fighters of the hills, and would conquer by the same. Forbearing to object that the campaign might take place chiefly in the open Thessalian plain, I asked an artilleryman if there were many of his service who could speak Turkish ? ' Not I, for one,' he answered scornfully, ' but our guns there can say what a Turk will understand.' I hope they could, for probably they are in Turkey now.

From Kalabáka five kilted men were sent next day to escort us on a long march to the outposts above Diskáta. They were true soldiers of the hillman kind, lean, long-stepping, untiring, to whom the admirable Greek schools had given intelligence and interests little like those of our Highlanders. We talked, for example, as we strode together, about the Emperor Hadrian. The way lay under the Metéora rocks, and halting below one of the monasteries, we summoned with loud shouts the 'fishers of men'. But their windlass remained still, and the kilted men, growing impatient, began to fire upwards. One or two bullets skimmed the prior's tiles, and a monk appeared at an opening to ask our pleasure. We called to him to let down the

net, but pleading that his fellows were all at meat, he offered us no better than cranky ladders, which swayed in the wind, one above another, against the overhanging cliff. We had neither stomach nor head for such escalade; but two of the soldiers dared it, and, once aloft, soon had the windlass manned and the net lowered. The rope had plainly seen many and better days, but up we must go. We lay down together in the meshes, which were gathered and hooked above; the rope strained, the net tightened, and we slowly rose, locked like a pair of bagged ferrets in an inextricable embrace, spun, bumped the cliff, spun again for an eternity, till gaffed and drawn into the entry, we realized that we yet breathed.

The monks bade us coldly welcome, though we gave them time to finish meat while we looked at the dark church, whose only interest lies in its age, and climbed to the rounded summit of the rock, where fed eleven snow-white sheep and one coal-black, in memory, I suppose, of the apostolic Twelve. The keys of the Treasury were said to be with the Bishop elsewhere; but I suspect we might have been shown the precious things but for the presence of our kilted guards, who treated the fathers with scant respect, and were evidently feared. The Prior bemoaned the coming war, complaining that no one would turn *kaloyer* now; he had but five monks all told. But the Bursar was a better patriot, who would breathe fire and slaughter, if the men of Athens did not make war,

Where was Constantine tarrying who should lead the Greeks ? Ah ! who knew ? he asked darkly.

The day was far spent when we saw the block-houses at last, Greek to right, and Turk to left, on a low ridge. The way had lain through a wild and ill-tracked country, where were a few Vlach villages, of evil fame for past raiding and present brigandage ; and from the frontier we looked north over a yet more savage prospect. Diskáta lay hidden by a shoulder of the hill, and nothing but a rough mule path came up from it. There were no such proofs of Turkish assembly visible from this point, as we had seen from Malúna, and the half-dozen infantrymen who squatted on the Turkish side of the line were tatterdemalions. The Haliacmon basin lay in deep purple shadow ; and beyond it a tumbled sea of mountain waves, swelling to west and north, broke here and there in snows. On the other hand the bastions of Pindus rose against the sunset out of a blue-grey mist, which hid their roots and all the plain. But such beauties had lost any charm they may ever have had for our hosts, the two Greek officers in charge of the blockhouse. It was very lonely, they said, and how long would they be left there ? One who had been on the hills fourteen months showed himself a more doubtful prophet even than the men of Malúna. Would Macedonia indeed rise ? If not, could the thin Greek line hold the Malakás pass ? and how should he alone stem the unknown flood which might well up from Diskáta ? Small

blame to him for his doubts, with five hours of marching over rough paths and unbridged streams to his nearest support.

The two were as lavish of good cheer as glad of our coming, and one kept the caraffe of *raki* replenished and the wine flowing free, while the other took his turn to patrol. After that surfeit, fevered already by our long tramp, we found broken sleep in a clean, cold soldier's room, and were up and about in good time to watch the first blush of day on the Pindus snows, and begin the tramp to Kalabáka again. We went back to Larissa by railway, and at the junction of Velestino I spied, to my surprise, a banker of my former acquaintance in Alexandria. I asked him what he did in this far province? 'Business', he said, 'in Kalabáka—some men to see there.' The men, though I knew it not, were those volunteers who would raid over the frontier some weeks later and compel war; and it was this banker, as kindly and brave a man as I have known, who financed that fatal venture of fanatic Hellenism. The following evils broke his heart, it was said, and he died not many months later.

In Larissa once more I had news both of the purpose of the Powers to prevent war, and of the exceeding unwillingness of the Greek court to yield to the desire of the mob. Prince Constantine was to come in a few days, but I was warned that his mission was to hinder, not hasten outbreak. I resolved to await at least his coming, and busied

myself with one more visit to the outposts, this time at the eastern end, by Rapsáni near Tempe ; but I got little thereby except a sight of the Vale, and a deeper sense of the unfitness of the trailing conscripts met upon the road. It was strange to see Thessalian Turks peaceably tilling their fields, as the soldiers passed ; and, maybe, they looked for war as little as I. The Prince came at last, to be met with salvoes of artillery and a solemn assurance ' in the name of the Church of Larissa and the great martyrs of Crete ' that all the hope of Greece was in him ; but when he paraded the garrison, it was said he liked it ill. In any event weeks must yet pass before war would be declared (if ever), and my time was up. I yielded my place to my companion, and shipped at Volo with a heady pack of Greek patriots, each of whom, finding at dinner a Briton who understood his speech, exhorted the rest to be calm, and forthwith fell into frenzy. Let all Europe come on ! Greece in her turn would blockade Europe. ' Ah ! what you really fear is Hellenism, the Great Power to be. England covets Crete — that is the secret cause of all.' I had heard more than enough by coffee time, and sought peace on deck watching the hills darken behind Thermopylae, where once upon a time Greeks died in silence.

I was to play the journalist once more about a month later, when returned from Lycia to find the war begun and, indeed, all but over. Faithful news

was wanted from Crete concerning both the plans of the rebels in that day of Greek despair and the state of the Moslem islanders, now almost all gathered into Candia within a fence of British and Italian tents. I was bound for home, but agreed to take Crete on the way ; and landing at Canea, I was allowed to go out to the rebel outposts on Akrotíri, with an Italian bugler and a stalwart Highlander of our Seaforths, whose native brae was Wapping. The rebels swarmed out of their shelters at the bugle's note, and, after brief parley, let me pass in. Except for black Cretan kerchiefs bound about their heads, they were all in serge clothing of sailor fashion, got I know not how or whence, and all had Belgian arms. They led me to a shady spot, set chairs, and began to talk in Greek. But presently the chief, a man of consequence who had been in the Island Council under the Pact of Halépa, came up in haste, and finding all speaking at once, proposed French. Thus question and answer passed in quiet, and babel arose only when my words were summarized from time to time in the common speech with more rhetoric than I had used. The sum of an hour's converse was this. The rebels were more set than ever on rebellion. If one army of the Greeks had run, another would stand, and the fleet was undefeated still. Had the Cretans ships, they would send fifteen thousand men to defend their Mother ; for how could they desert her in her sorrow ? They did not wish to stand alone in insular freedom, for there was none

in Crete fit to govern, and they feared treachery of one to another. If the Powers occupied the island, the British would fall out presently with the Russians and call the Turks back. 'Vassos and his Greeks may stay or go—we care not. We shall fight on. We have food enough here, though little corn, but in the western parts there is some dearth. Still the blockade can be cheated. What have we to lose now by holding out or to gain by giving in? Most of us have lost long ago all we had. The Moslem Cretans must leave the island, for their hate is too fierce for peace.' It came to this—they defied us, well knowing that no one Power would be suffered by the rest to land enough men to sweep their hills; and I rose convinced that union with the Hellenic kingdom is the inborn hope of a Cretan. He sucks it in with his mother's milk, and breathes it at her knee; reason is powerless against his sentiment, and to use it worse than vain. We parted in peace, and my Wapping Scot, though all the hour he had kept his eyes front with the wooden rigour of a snuff-seller's ensign, remarked on every detail of each rebel's dress and arms as we trudged back over the rocks,

I went on to Candia, and could find no clean lodging. The Christian houses were shut and barred, and, as the whole town was unquiet and every native Moslem a *bashibazuk* armed to his teeth, it seemed wise to live near the harbour. I applied to our vice-consul, a Cretan Greek, who was to perish in the massacre of the following year.

He had a house, he replied, of his own, hard by the quay, and very clean. It was let to a Corfiote, who was not very well ; but he and his wife kept to one room, and doubtless would gladly let me the others. I asked nothing better, and went off to view the house. It seemed both clean and convenient, and I passed from room to room till I reached a closed door on the upper floor. A woman, who answered my knock, said that her husband would be glad to arrange the matter. He was in bed, and not very well ; but would I be pleased to enter and talk to him ? I stepped in, and sat some minutes by his bed-head in the close air. He looked wasted, and at last I asked if it were fever of the country he had ? ‘ No,’ said he. ‘ Small-pox. This is the twelfth day.’ I fled, and expecting the deadly rash to break out any day, found another house, wherein I tried to make shift. But the windows looked on the Cathedral yard, in which an Italian regiment of very young soldiers bivouacked each night, drinking, singing, and fighting from dusk to dawn ; and in the end I pitched a tent on the ramparts, near the camp of a Mountain Battery of ours. The days were spent in watching the route-marching of our troops, listening to all that commandants would tell me, and riding out towards the rebel lines. On these excursions I visited Cnossus for the first time, and dreamed of digging in the Palace of Minos, some of whose lettered stones already stood revealed. Indeed I was offered a squad of sappers, who might begin

the search there and then ; but I refused it for lack of time and in distrust of soldier diggers, whom I had known in Alexandria for the best navvies but the worst finders of antiques in the world. The lesser Bairam, the feast of Abraham's sacrifice, was at hand, and I waited only for it. If ever the town was to rise and hurl itself on the exultant cordon of rebels, it would be then. But after all the feast passed without any worse incident than the firing of many bullets from the town over our camp, perhaps at hazard, but, perhaps, also in our despite ; and by the middle of May I could bid farewell for ever, as I thought, to the island of Crete.

CHAPTER VI

LYCIA

THE war, for which I had waited in vain, broke out when I was far from its alarms. It had long been arranged that I should report on ancient sites in Lycia, for whose excavation certain scholars, jealous for the fame of Fellows, proposed to found a fund. Three cities, Xanthus, Pátara, and Myra, offered the best hope of success, and to survey them I left Athens with one companion as soon as I was free of Thessaly. We re-embarked at Smyrna on a Greek coaster, hoping to find a small sailing vessel for hire in the first Lycian port of call ; but deceived in this, we had to keep on with the Greek, and try our luck in the busier harbour of Castellórizo.

Of all the Greek isles Castellórizo lies most apart, outside the Archipelago, and nearly a hundred miles east of Rhodes, its motherland. The main coast over against it is the wildest of Anatolia, piled ridge on ridge from surf to snow-line, and inhabited by few except wandering shepherds. Descendants of sturdy Rhodians, who would not abide under the Hospitallers, hold the barren rock, and live by exploiting the sea. The Turk is overlord ; but we found his representatives, a *mudir* and half a dozen excisemen, who were dependent on Greek keels for all their communication with the mainland, chastened in demeanour and quick to defer to quayside

opinion. This set strongly in our favour; and forbearing to demand our papers, they offered weak propitiatory coffee, and withdrew to inactivity. Heavily sparred brigs and two-masted caiques were packed that morning so close into the basin that a man might cross it dryshod; and the magazines and counting-houses round the port bore witness that those ships plied a gentler trade than that which once made a Castelloriziot sail a terror in the Levant. In fact, the traffic between the smaller Anatolian ports and Alexandria, where you may often see their antique high-pooped hulls lying under the breakwater, and what they carry is chiefly firewood and charcoal, cut and burned on the Lycian hills. 'The mainland, then, is yours?' we asked. 'Ours, as much as any one's,' replied sons of corsairs. 'We take what we want. Whom should we pay?'

Just ten years before I had had a passing vision of the isle from the deck of a rusty tramp steamer, which called in vain for freight, and sheered off again ere I was well awake; and one thing especially I had not forgotten, the beauty of the fisher-folk whom we had passed drifting on a windless bay under the sunrise, 'dark faces pale against a rosy flame'. The type in Castellórizo is the finest among latter-day Hellenes. There you will find Praxitelean heads in the flesh—find the oval face, with brows spread broad and low beneath clustering hazel hair. Grey-brown almond eyes lie wide, deep, long and liquid; noses stand forth straight and

faultless ; upper lips and chins are short, and mouths mobile and fine. But the straight fall of the skull behind should warn you that the race is old, if a certain meagreness of tissue and over-refinement of feature have not already betrayed its age. Women, who had three-year babes at their knees, showed too much bone, and little softness of outline in their faces ; but none the less we thought them very beautiful, gazing about us with as little discretion as may be used in an Eastern society, and marvelling that painters and sculptors had not happened on this dream of fair women. The men, when they had shown us their pretentious marble church, garish with gilt carvings and Russian icons, led on to the schools, and first to that of the girls. It should have been holiday ; but I suspect the classes were warned as soon as we were seen to land, for no Greek can deny himself the pleasure of showing his scholars to a western stranger. As we came within the door the serried ranks arose, and the eyes of fifty maidens, each fit to bear Athena's *peplus*, looked into our own. Miserably we heard a hymn, miserably stammered incoherent thanks, and miserably fled. Who were we that we should patronize a choir of goddesses ?

The town, more regularly laid out than most of its kind, rises in a horseshoe, tier on tier, from the port, whence radiate steep stone ladders dividing the wedges of habitation, as in the *cavea* of an ancient theatre. We strolled from one horn of the bay to the other, admiring such nice cleanliness of

streets and houses as you may see in the richer Cyclad isles, in Santorin, for example, and here and there on the Turkish coast, but seldom or never on the Greek mainland. In Castellórizo to be dirty is to confess social failure. The housewife of the most speckless floor holds highest her head, and her husband's prodigality of whitewash and paint would delight a London landlord. Blue balconies overhanging the roadway, and shutters and doors of startling hue seemed fewer than in other Greek towns of like pretension ; and glimpses of interiors assured us that more than the outside is here made clean. The windows look for the most part not on the street, but on high-walled courts, in the secretive Moslem manner, having been set thus perhaps in darker days, when the island was still a pirates' nest. But many a heavy street-door was thrown wide that morning to reveal garden-fringes of orange and lemon and almond trees which framed geometric patterns of many-coloured pebbles ; and we had to parry laughing invitations from women-folk, standing in holiday velvet and lace by their entrance-ways.

At length we climbed out on to the saddle of the twin-peaked rock, which is all the island. The southward slope looked too naked for even a goat's subsistence, and our self-appointed guides said they had but one precious spring of running water. To northward the Lycian seaboard, rising to points and bars of snow, filled the distance. In the nearer view lay the burnished strait of Anti-

phellus, with a fishing fleet becalmed, and at our feet, the white crescent of the town. Pointing to the mainland, we asked what concern the islanders had there? They pastured their few flocks, was the reply, cut wood, burned charcoal, and owned orange and olive gardens or small farms. There were, indeed, several little colonies of Castelloriziotte squatters, and one large village of their folk, Dembré, on the coast eastwards; but no one went there 'since the measuring'. The last words were said quickly and low, and when we sought an interpretation of them, each man looked at his neighbour, as the habit is on Ottoman soil when talk has chanced on some public sore. Even we might be spies. We asked no more, knowing we should learn presently whatever was to be learned; for Dembré lies near ancient Myra, whither we were bound.

We found a fishing boat waiting approval at the quay, and the bargain was soon struck. One-eyed Antóni, his son, and his nephew bound themselves to do our pleasure for ten days at least, if they might bring back a load of Fíneka oranges, should they chance to meet with it. It sounded a pleasant cargo, and we agreed. In the early afternoon we pushed off, the light breeze being reported fair; but in the open the deceitful airs died away, and we fell to rocking on a sullen oily swell, which was rolling up from south-west to hurl itself on the iron coast, with a distant murmur of surf. There was nothing to do for hours but to follow the shadow of

the sail. Our Greek cook (the same who had shared my vigil on the night of the mutiny at Canea) dived under the half-deck, and presently fell very sick. He had been engaged on his word that he had served the *Messageries Maritimes* of France; but now he explained between paroxysms that his service had been done in an engineer's house ashore. I doubt if even so much was true, for later on I was to hear him through the thin wall of a hut brag to gaping peasants that he was the bastard of a French general, and had known me from my childhood. The one thing sure in his past was that he had sung in cafés on the Galata quay, and the one thing certain in his future that, except in the near neighbourhood of quays, he would prove useless throughout this cruise.

In the waning day the sails filled, and the boat began to slip fast and faster eastward before a whistling breeze, which had caught up the swell. Cliffs loomed near, and in the last of the light a surf-washed wall rose up right ahead. Antóni smiled at my doubts, and held on his course till it seemed we must crash ashore. Then the rock parted this way and that; we sheered to left, to right, and to left again, and lo! a great water and the long unruffled track of the moon on the landlocked bosom of Kékova. We ran to a berth under a shaggy hillock crowned with dim fantastic outlines of Lycian rock-tombs—the forgotten cemetery of Aperlae—and spying a single light ashore, landed to try the house for supplies. The Greek fishermen

who inhabited it, Castelloriziotte colonists known to Antóni, sold us eggs and a fowl; but they were strangely disturbed at sight of us, and dumb-founded when told we were bound for Dembré. I bethought me they might be smugglers on occasion, and asked no questions, but feeling that something was not well with Dembré, planned to avoid the village on the morrow by running to the mouth of the Myra river and walking thence to the ruins. But next morning the south-wester, which sped us merrily on an even keel down the Kékova strait, was beating up so rough a sea in the open that Antóni would not risk the longer run, and beaching us on the nearest sand, sent his boat back to shelter.

We had to make our way, therefore, towards the village by an unfrequented path through the gardens, and we met no man. The streets were very silent, and reaching a coffee-house we turned into it to seek a guide. A group of Greeks stared at us open-mouthed, and scarcely replying to our salutations, slunk one by one away; nor was the obsequious host less perturbed. In less than a minute a heavy footfall sounded without, and first one police-trooper and then another strode in. Who were we? We told our nationality. Had we papers? Yes, and in order for the coast so far as Adalia. What might be our business here? To see the ruins of Myra. How had we come? By boat, we said. Where was that boat? It had run to Kékova. Then back you go to it at once, said they. I replied that we were come to see Myra, would

certainly see it, and must, moreover, sleep the night here, for it would be too long a tramp back to the boat, which was lying we knew not exactly where. *Olmáz ! Yasák !* they said in one breath. Impossible ! It is forbidden ! Where, then, was their superior officer ? Up country, they answered. Well, I said, rising, you will send our papers up to him, and meanwhile we walk on to Myra. And so we did, none hindering us, but none agreeing to guide ; and unmobbed for once, we roamed about the vaults and horseshoe of the great Theatre, and climbed unwatched the rock-cut stairway which leads to the great carved cliff of tombs. Thus some hours passed pleasantly before we saw a trooper and an unmounted man coming across the fields. The trooper brought word that, since we were here and said we would not go away, we might stay the night, and his companion, a Greek, would house us. Whereafter both settled down to stay beside us ; but the trooper, tired by his gallop inland, soon fell asleep in the shade, and the Greek, following me out of earshot, unfolded at last the mystery of the Measuring of Myra.

Dembré, it appeared, had two titles to fame, over and above the fact that it once was Myra. It was the nearest considerable village to the safe Kékova harbour, and it possessed, in the half-buried church of the martyr Nicholas, a shrine to which the Orthodox communities of the world pay no small reverence. Now, from time to time European warships find their way into the Kékova pool, and

more than one has chanced to make some stay. Their visits have not passed unremarked by the Ottoman government. If Russia, or Austria, or England should seek a Levantine harbour, what better than Kékova? When Russia holds the Gospel in front, Turks look for a sword at her back. Therefore uneasiness at Stambul became panic when it was reported that a Russian consul had bought of a Greek farmer the shell of the church of Saint Nicholas and the land about it. It was said that he was proceeding to excavate the shrine, to set it in order, and to arrange for the resumption of the holy office, and already was in treaty for the sites of two other churches which stand amid the ruins of Andráki, close to the eastern mouth of Kékova. The Porte resolved to act. A commission of three officials appeared in Dembré, proclaiming a mandate to 'measure' the village, its houses and its lands, with a view to readjusting its contribution to the Imperial Exchequer; and measure they did with admirable deliberation, living the while at the charges of the farmers. Here be it observed that the Ottoman Law, as it was then, warned all men to leave buildings, lands, or other real estate untouched during such interval, usually short enough, as must elapse between the making of a survey and the final notification of assessment. Neither might any kind of property be bought or sold, nor could a barn, a house, a fence be built or even repaired. Two years ago the measurers had vanished from Dembré, and from that day to the

hour of our arrival the village had heard no word of its assessment.

Imagine those years. The village was frozen as by a spell. A special police-post was established landwards, and all neighbours were searched as they approached or left the suspect community. The weekly market ceased, and all commerce of men whatsoever. Houses gaped to wind and rain, but they might not be made good ; and lands went out of cultivation for lack of seed. This state of things endured weeks, months, a year, till, sick with hope deferred, some householders, abandoning all they had, slipped away of dark nights aboard Castelloriziotte caiques, and passed on to free Greek soil, fearful of being retrieved from their mother-isle. Round the remainder in Dembré the cordon was drawn closer ; but a few others managed to flee as time went on, leaving their houses tenantless and their gardens to the riot of weeds. Outsiders, even kinsmen, shunned the banned village and were shunned in turn, if bold enough to enter, lest suspicion attach of trafficking or plotting escape. No formal taxes were levied, but the police had to live, which came to the same thing, or to more, in the end ; and currency grew rarer and rarer in the village, little or none coming from without. It was the remnant of a lately prosperous community that we had seen hanging about the lanes, fearful to act or speak, watching for a release that never came. My informant supposed nothing could be done to help them. He himself would suffer, of course, as

soon as we were gone, for his entertainment of us to-night, forced though it was. His complaint was uttered less in anger than with a certain air of apology, as a man, conscious of futility, might complain of the weather or any other act of God. The idea that the Common Law had been shamefully abused to his undoing, had probably never occurred to him, his view of Law being that of most poor folk, that it is wholly external, the voice of an irresponsible will to be endured or evaded like any other tyranny. His Padishah had only acted as Kings have ever acted in the East, from the Great King, the King of Assyria, to the latest Sultan or Shah.

Afterwards we visited the fatal church. It is claimed for it (perhaps extravagantly) that it is the same in which the great Bishop of Myra, who is become the patron saint of fishermen, and inspires the Christmas dreams of children over half the world, ministered and was buried. St. Nicholas lies at Bari now ; but the violated place of his first rest is shown at Dembré in a recess fenced from the northern aisle of the basilica by a low screen of varied marbles somewhat more recent in date than the saint's day. The apse retains the form of the original tribunal, with its stone throne set in a semicircle of seats, moss-grown and stained with green slime. Taken for all in all, this church is the most interesting memorial of the early days of Christianity, which remains in the land where Paul conducted the first Christian mission.

Our host entertained us as well as his poor means allowed, and spread long rugs on his low divans. In the morning light I was struck with the beauty of their hues, and asked their age, which seemed to be some seventy years. The owner whispered to my servant, Would I buy ? He wished to sell all he had, gather a little privy cash, and make his escape. He asked no more than a fair price, and was willing to carry the load five or six rugged miles. I have those rugs still. We found the boat in a sheltered cove of Kékova, and tacking down the strait, brought up under the shore of deserted Dóliché, where we fished and ate our catch under the moon, and cradled on the gentle swell, slept careless of cockroaches and fleas.

On the morrow Antóni set sail westward, but we made slow way, for the wind was contrary, and it was not till three days later that, after revisiting Castellórizo, we stood in to Kalamáki bay about the third hour. With difficulty horses were hired for the road to Pátara and Xanthus, and we stumbled out of the little *scala* early in the afternoon ; but ill mounted on a rough road, we did not sight the vale of Pátara till the sun was low. Patches of stagnant water, catching the level rays, glistened here and there like gold foil on the poisonous greenness of the hollow ; while other patches, grey in shadow and golden-brown in light, gradually resolved themselves into ruins standing in deep marsh. A tethered horse grazing on the rim of the slough, a faint tinkling of goat bells, and three black tents

near a pine-log shelter alone betrayed the presence of man on the holiest site of Lycia.

Certain of swampy ground ahead, we dismounted ; for most Anatolian horses, whether from heredity or from early experience of bogland, will fall into a paroxysm of terror at the sight of water in the path, and I have known the most battered pack-jade rear and prance like Job's war-horse rather than pass a gutter. So afoot we went down to see Pátara. These cumbered sites of dead cities may refresh the soul, but surely they vex the body. The curse of Lost Paradise seems to brood over them, bidding the longest thorns and the stoutest thistles grow and multiply between their stones. Snakes and scorpions wait for the unwary hand in every cranny, and all blocks seem to have fallen edge uppermost or to be ready to turn under a hasty foot.

The ruins of Pátara lie round its silted harbour, which is become a reedy morass. A fortress of the Byzantine age has been the last permanent habitation ; and along the broken crenellations of its walls we followed clumsily the soft-shod feet of an agile Yuruk boy. It was no holiday ramble. The wall was a mere *arête* between inky depths to left and a slimy jungle to right ; it was often broken and always unsafe, and over its rottenest parts passage had to be forced through clumps of rank vegetation. We made slow progress, marked by the splashing of loose stones into the pool and the scurrying of its myriad gruesome tenants, and when we had struggled to dry land, near the sand-choked

ruin of the Theatre, it was high time to seek some lodging for the night.

Far up the marsh the cry of a goatherd driving his flock to higher ground sounded faintly amid a responsive jangle of gathering bells ; and loud in our ears sang the first mosquitoes of sundown. What pests must rise from that rotting slough of a summer night, making a camp intolerable, even on the heights above ! But in chill April weather one might hope to pass the dark hours well enough. We made for the pine-log shelter and the three black booths, and finding the first full of dung, wherein fleas and ticks unnumbered lay in wait, sent our Greek ahead to parley with the Yuruks. This was a tactical mistake. Hospitality, even in the East, is more often enforced by public opinion than offered out of the fulness of the heart. Therefore, you should meet your possible host half-way without the hesitancy which the polite code of the West prescribes. Appeal boldly to his tribal conscience ; identify yourself with his dwelling or his kin ; touch his beard, his knees, his head, his salt, his tent-rope. All nomads are encased in tribal selfishness, and among the most exclusive are the Yuruks, who wander under the shadow of a government wholly external to them, taking all it can and giving nothing in exchange. What do they want with the apparatus of official Ottoman civilization, with police, only seen at the heels of the publican, with the local *mairie*, only entered at the heels of the police, with new roads and spidery bridges

which their sagacious asses avoid ? All these things they curse in one breath with the provinces of Yemen and Hasa, to which their sons are sent as conscripts. Such men offer no spontaneous welcome to the casual stranger—a tax-gatherer as likely as not, or a spy of the local assessor—who knows ? and a party like ours, not strange enough in gait or guise to rouse that curiosity which overmasters suspicion, will always fare ill if it waits an invitation.

The Greek came back to say that we were among bad men, and had best go back to Kalamáki, night though it was. But we had no mind to remount our jaded beasts and stumble for four hours over that execrable path, and the Yuruks looked honest folk enough. So doing last what we should have done first, we walked straightway into the largest tent and sat down by the ashes of its hearth. No one showed surprise. We were within our social right by the code, and the owner had no choice but to follow and speak the customary words of welcome. But suspicion clouded his simple mind, and we had to go through that exasperating Ollendorffian dialogue, which, in one language or another, must be held on arrival wherever men have been taught by long experience to conceal their substance.

‘ Have you barley for our beasts ? ’

‘ We have no barley.’

‘ But we give money.’ (*Chins jerked and tongues clicked to imply incredulity and denial.*)

‘ Well—have you chopped straw ? ’

‘ There is none, Wallah ! ’

‘ Good—nor eggs ? ’

‘ *We have no eggs.*’ (*Abundance in the neat camp.*)

‘ Nor milk ? ’

‘ To-day, none.’ (*Yesterday and to-morrow, never to-day.*)

‘ Nor butter, nor bread, nor anything ? ’

‘ Not anything, by the head of God ! ’

‘ But these fowls, they are barren ? ’

‘ Ai-i ! they lay eggs, God be praised ! ’

‘ And those nanny-goats, they are all dry ? ’

‘ Wallah ! They make milk.’

‘ Then, by God’s will, we stay. Quick ! barley, milk, eggs ! We stay.’

And in nine cases out of ten your simple wants will be supplied ; and although sooner or later you must parry an inevitable prayer for those rejuvenating philtres, of which all Franks are understood to hold the secret, you will part best of friends at dawn from unwilling hosts of the evening before.

Should an Eastern depart from his indifferent reserve and greet you cordially at first sight, beware of him. He meditates some particular motive of self-interest. A few years ago certain official assessors of land-tax on their way up the left bank of the Nile suddenly found the obstruction, which had embittered their earlier progress, yield to a spirit of frank hospitality. Sheikhs and notables came forth to greet them. The best of the village was at their service, and the fullest revelation was made at once of the wealth of each community, and

especially the high value of its lands. Meanwhile another Commission, advancing *pari passu* up the contrary bank, was equally surprised by a like change in the peasants' demeanour. Its business was to purchase ground for the track of a State Railway, and field after field along the proposed line was, it proved, hardly worth an old song. Thus for awhile were both Commissions in clover. Then weeping and wailing broke out behind them, and obstruction became more dogged than ever in front. The assessors had been mistaken for the railway surveyors, the surveyors for the assessors.

With us, however, all would now go well. Neither our clothes nor, truth to tell, our halting Turkish reminded the old Yuruk of any publican he had ever known. Pine-logs were heaped on the embers, tobacco-boxes offered and accepted, buttermilk and unleavened dampers brought in by the wrinkled dame. The patriarch, readily unbosoming his griefs after the manner of his kind, told how he had broken up and sowed a bit of Noman's land, and promptly found it assessed as a field under irrigation; how his last plough-ox had been taken to discharge a debt not half its value, and his son, the support of his age, sent to the Yemen—never, God be witness, to return. Wallah! *he* knew the Government! The tale sounded pathetic to our ears, and we tried awkwardly to sympathize with the teller; but we got no help from our Greek, reassured by this time, and well aware how light such woes lie on the bird-like souls of wanderers

who are here to-day, dispersed to-morrow, and fatalist above the settled folk. He chimed in with ribald pleasantries, reminiscent of his Gálata days, to the delight of the patriarch and his son, little used to urban wit.

His indecencies, but half understood, seemed no affair of mine, and thankful to be discharged from the talk, I ceased to listen. The night had fallen luminous, with a rising moon, and profoundly still. Not a needle stirred in the pine fronds. Only the flat note of a bell sounded now and again from the fold as a beast turned in his lair ; and in the pauses of talk one might hear even the faint intermittent crepitation of stones, trees, and earth, respiring the heat of the past day. Whenever, to the relief of unaccustomed eyes, the smoky fire died down, a strident column of mosquitoes would sail in by the door to dispute our persons with the fleas.

Such tent-dwellers seem lighter of heart than the men of Turkish towns and villages, merrier perhaps for having less between them and the sky. There is this to be said for tent-life in a warm clime—it exhilarates, like the casting off of clothing ; and perhaps for this reason civilized men of other climes have so much hankering for it, despite its insecurity and its plague of blowing dust, and the noonday heat and the cold of the dawn. But the canvas booth is not meant for house-dwellers who carry with them much furniture and many scattered possessions, and would sit high and stand upright. It should be low to cheat the wind, and empty of

all that may gather dust—a mere canvas burrow, such a shelter from draught and sun and dew as suits the simplicity and the poverty of minds in which want of occupation and of variety in life leave no void to be filled by the morbid introspection dear to civilized solitaries.

The woman took no part in the discourse, nor did she share the meal with her husband after his guests were satisfied; but having tendered him the bowl with the gentlest motion of one palm towards her breast, in obedience to an immemorial instinct of reverence for the male, she sank on her heels to coax the fire and croon over the ashes, throwing now and again a question at us, till some pastoral duty called her outside the tent. It was perfect domestic accord. Man and woman, without friction, question or strife, evidently sufficed together for all the necessary functions of existence. She, in her constant performance of physical labours, had probably never known the woes of either her toiling or her idle Western sisters. For her no sexual cravings unappeased, no assumption of the manly part, no fear of loneliness in middle life or age. If she must be obedient in all things, even to stripes, the inexorable opinion of a simple society would protect her from physical tyranny. For in the nomad's tent the rod is held a fool's weapon, and shame is on him who can rule his household with no other, or fails to pay in a multitude of punctilious ways due honour to his wife.

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I must have fallen into uneasy sleep, for, when roused by the cold, as much as by insect legions, I found the talk ceased and the talkers slumbering, feet to fire. A sea-wind, rising gustily, fanned an intermittent glow in the heart of the embers, and their dusky gleam revealed for a moment the old Yuruk, lying supine, with his head on the lap of his dame, who sat stark asleep against the tent-pole. Seen thus, the two looked less like human beings than gnomes, or survivors of some primæval race which worshipped other gods. And so, in a sense, they were. Though the Yuruks profess Islam, Allah has not the best of their private allegiance ; and under his name they revere, without ritual or articulate creed, some private tribal god, with whom they feel the possibility of more intimate communion. The All-Father of the Arabs has no more chased the petty gods of place and tribe out of the Nearer East than He of the Hebrews. He has been accepted, indeed, as a strictly constitutional monarch, or rather, perhaps, as a Judge of Appeal who may resolve now and then those age-long feuds in which tribal gods involve their human kin ; but, for the rest, accepted only on condition that he prescribe no duty except towards himself. He is an immaterial Allah, without parts or earthly semblance, not because he is a spirit, but because he is a shadow. Nothing of the real sense of the omnipresence and omnipotence of a Divine Being, which seems to possess the most stolid of settled Moslems and elevates their creed at its best into one of the purest forms of mono-

theism conceivable, is present to the wanderers. They are as careless of Allah as, they take it, he is careless of them. When he first made the world, say Bedawis, he ordered Creation during six days, and, very weary on the seventh, was composing himself to sleep, when a man stood before him and said : 'Thou hast apportioned the world, but to us given nothing. Behold us still in the desert !' And the Creator looked and saw the Bedawis indeed forgotten in the Waste ; but he would not disturb what he had done. 'This will I give you,' he replied ; 'since ye dwell in what is no man's, take what is any man's. Go your way.' And their way from that hour have the Bedawis gone, careless of Creation and Creator.

It was deep night still, and the moon, sunken towards the sea-rim, threw an image of the tent-door across the fire, bleaching the glow of the wood embers. Little by little the pale light crept up the old dame's face. She opened her eyes suddenly as a waking animal, shuffled her knees sideways from under the man's shoulders, gently lowered his head to a saddlebag, and yawning, left the tent. I heard her gather fuel without, with which presently she made up the fire. Then she went down towards the fold, where a continuous jangle told of uneasy udders and prescience of coming day.

The fresh warmth to my feet made me drowsy again, and when I woke once more, the dusk of dawn was in the tent, but the dame had not returned. Still milking and tending the herd, she

at least showed little enough of that indolent habit with which we credit the East.

I scrambled to my feet, stiff with cramp and cold, and stood in the tent-door. The great wolf-dogs, who had bayed me over night, recognized a temporary adoption into the family by sidling silently out of range, and settling watchful again on the gossamers. During the chill hours a false impalpable sea had streamed inland, and, filling the hollow where Pátara lay, had submerged all except the higher dunes ; but above its smoky limit, the true sea could be seen swelling to the horizon in palest tints of mauve and green. The profile of a shaggy range beyond the Xanthus river grew harder and harder against the brightening sky, rib after rib detaching itself on the ample slopes ; and my eyes, led upwards along its crest towards the parent chain of Taurus, caught the first flush of day on a pinnacle of snow. The old Yuruk stretched himself once or twice, rose, spat, pushed through the door, and, leaving his dame to set milk and cheese before us, strode off without a word of farewell.

The Yuruk guide of yesterday led us out northward through a triple Roman archway, and along a street of tombs. The Xanthus river rushed a mile or two on our left, red with the melted snows of Ak Dagħ, and a rudely paved path wound over spongy swards and across soft reedy channels towards the neck of the plain. One would have known it for a poisonous place, even had it

earned less ill-fame by killing two of Fellows' men. After an hour or two we reached a bridge, and beyond the outlet of the eastern swamp entered a region of scattered fields, gnarled olives, and solitary farms, holdings of the 'Turks' of Gunuk, who are sons of the old Lycians, county gentlemen in a small way, sportsmen always, and brigands now and then. Every man we met went armed, and the Bey, at whose house we dismounted under the steep of Xanthus, kept a guard of three.

The ruins, far seen on a sunlit slope since the first hour of our ride, lie on the lowest shelf of the mountains, above the river at the point where it issues into the plain. Little seemed changed since Fellows' day, and the stakes, with which he propped the roof of the 'Harpy Tomb', after stripping the frieze, still uphold it. If you feel a momentary pang of shame before that mutilated pillar, look round at the poisonous marsh and the wild hills and wilder men and you will not blame Fellows. How many artists of two generations would have seen the Harpy reliefs in their original place? The Theatre, whose curve is broken so oddly to avoid a pillar-tomb, is one tangle of brushwood; but the great four-square stela, inscribed on all its marble faces in the strange Lycian character, stands yet clear and unhurt; and you may walk eastwards from it all the length of a main street to a wide paved area, from which lesser flagged ways run right and left. The whole ground-plan of a city is there, and evidently more survives from the earliest

days than on any other Anatolian site. Some day a digger will get a rich booty at Xanthus, gathering his firstfruits, I dare wager, on that jutting shelf shored up by cyclopean walling behind the Theatre, where a temple of the Xanthian Apollo or of Sarpedon stood as an outpost towards the sea, and struggling barley reveals, by the variety of its growth, the outline of a great oblong building. But the day of digging Xanthus seems no nearer. First Crete, and then Sparta have drawn off our explorers, and Lycia must still wait.

The return journey round the eastern side of the swamp I have endured twice since that day, and know it for one of the most painful in Anatolia, so rough and broken is the paved path, and so dank the air. I shall not revive its memory. No sumptuous yacht was ever a more welcome sight than Antóni's little craft rocking in the evening light under the cliffs of Kalamáki. The south-wester had lulled at last, and we ran out before a light land breeze. We had no mind to go back to Castellórizo, unless we could do no better; for there, what with blockade-running in Crete, and waiting on the chance of a Turkish war, the Greek coasters could no longer be trusted to call. A week or so even in that fortunate isle would hang too heavy on our hands. So we lay to off the western point, Antóni promising to run to Rhodes, for the first time in his little boat's history, should a fair wind spring up by the next noon. As luck would have it, a north-easter began to blow at dawn, and he kept his word, as

always. We woke to find the boat heeling over at racing pace with the mouth of the Xanthus astern and the bluffs of the Seven Capes sliding forward one behind another. As we hissed through the white-caps of the open gulf, I liked Antóni better than ever. He cuddled the tiller of his little boat like a lover, talking of the fame which would be hers in Castellórizo if she could run the eighty miles to Rhodes before sundown. And she did her best. The harbour was well in sight when the wind died away, leaving a light night-air to waft us, after some hours of calm, to the windmills, which have stood on the mole of Rhodes since the Hospitallers came.

With the first of the morning we heard the news—the Greeks had crossed the Thessalian border, and it was war. Some Jewish loafer on the quay must have reported that we were speaking Greek aboard ; for the port authority roundly refused to accept our British passports, and set a watch over us at our inn. At the same time Antóni and his boat found themselves under arrest. It mattered little, however ; for our acting consul knew me, and the Governor General of the Isles, who as *vali* of Adana had furthered my party some years before, was then in Rhodes, and had not forgotten. The embargo was lifted with a genial counsel to us not to run about the sea with Greeks till better times ; and Antóni, paid as we loved him, which was very well, picked up a cargo, and spread his sail for Castellórizo to tell the tale of the cruise.

CHAPTER VII

CRETE

THE massacre of Candia forced a Great Power to rid Crete for ever of the Turk ; and in the spring of 1899 I accompanied the future explorer of Cnossus on my fourth visit to that island. Arthur Evans had long laid his plans, and, with the forethought of genius, cast his bread on troubled waters by buying a Bey's part share of the site of the Palace of Minos. He seemed to waste labour and money ; for under the Ottoman law his title could not be made secure, and in the end his ownership proved null and void. But when others, who coveted Cnossus, put forward moral rights, he alone could urge the convincing claim of sacrifice ; and the Cretans, for whom he had done much in their hour of danger, upheld his cause in the hour of freedom. We journeyed, that spring, all round the eastern half of the island, pegging out claims for future digging. Known to the islanders as we both were (though I the less), we were made welcome everywhere. The land still showed ghastly wounds of its late long fight. Many villages lay gaunt skeletons of ruin ; and where olive groves had been, blackened stumps and pits bore witness to the ethnicidal fury of religious war in the Near East, which ever destroys the staple of a foeman's life, after it has killed his wife and her babe.

In the East of the island the French were still guiding the new rulers with the ready sympathy of Latin for Latin, and nearer to Candia the government had been committed for the moment to the honest but ruder hands of British subalterns. I spent a day or so with one of these. He knew no word of Greek, and it was told of him that, when he arrived on a polo pony to be a father to some twenty villages, the local Bishop called in state, bringing, as the ingratiating custom is, a turkey or two and a clutch of eggs. Our young law-giver, nosing a bribe, put him into the street, eggs, turkeys, and all. I sat one morning in the court-house to hear justice done to the people. The judge presided in knickerbockers and a cricket shirt—for the day was warm—and smoked his best-loved briar. A peasant, whose sheep had been driven off, had heard, after many days, a tinkling by night on a distant hillside, and claimed he knew his bells again. Did then one sheep-bell so differ from another? Solomon put it to the test. He sent his soldier servant to collect bells from the village shepherds, and on his return locked him in an inner room, while they waited in court. After a jangle behind the door, the judge asked whose bell had tinkled, and, on the witness of the servant, the shepherds were right every time. The peasant got back his sheep. Then a woman stood forth to accuse a man of trying her door by night with foul intent; but since he had neither prevailed nor spoken with her, and it was black dark, how had

she known what man he was ? It came out in evidence that this had not been his first visit, nor had he been used to find the door barred and the lady all unkind. Promptly he was fined a few piastres for disturbing the village peace, while the coy accuser was sent to hoe the Bishop's potato-field for a fortnight of working days. ' Ah ! this is Justice,' said the delighted Headman to me, ' we have not known it before in Crete.'

For us, then, and no others, in the following year, Minos was waiting when we rode out from Candia. Over the very site of his buried Throne a desolate donkey drooped, the one living thing in view. He was driven off, and the digging of Cnossus began. All men who care for these things know by now what was revealed in the next few weeks ; and it is another's right to retell the tale. I did something to help my colleague to start, for in digging, as in most ventures, the first steps are most difficult ; and I did more in the following months to define the limits of his vast field, of which much still waits the spade. But it grew clearer every day that the central hillock, which in all reason was his peculiar preserve, held the key of the town's early history, and almost all its riches, and that exploration were better left undone in the outskirts until the centre had all been laid bare. Therefore I quitted Cnossus in early May, and with Gregóri of Cyprus, who was still following my fortunes after a dozen years, set out eastwards for the second of our claims, a Cave which was suspected

to be the mythic birthplace of the Father God of Crete.

In our theology He, who shall be to all time, from all time has been ; but the Greek, conceiving Immortality more easily than Eternity, believed devoutly in a divine birthplace, which was pointed out on one hill, and branded the Cretans the liars of antiquity for showing on another the tomb of Zeus. Other lands, indeed, claimed its honour ; but the Cretan peaks, which rose in pale mornings and opalescent evenings out of the southern sea, prevailed with the Faithful. If, however, the Greek was sure of the island to which he owed his God, he was not, in his latter days at least, so sure which precise spot had been hallowed by the divine birth. The God was certainly cradled in a cave ; but there were two caves, the one in the central peak of Ida, the other in the lower but still majestic easterly mountain group of Dicte. Some, like the Sicilian Diodorus, who knew these rival claims, tried to reconcile them by telling that the babe, born on Dicte, was reared on Ida. But more voted for one or the other hill, and those of the best authority for Dicte. There the birth was placed by Hesiod, the eldest poet who relates the story ; there, too, by the great Romans, Lucretius and Virgil, to say nothing of lesser lights.

This Greek tale, become more familiar to the West than many myths of its own primitive creeds, varies little in the authorities. Cronus, King of Heaven, warned that a son shall cast him from his

realm, determines to devour his male issue as soon as born. But Queen Rhea, wrathful and feeling her hour nigh, flees to Crete, and on Dicte is delivered of a boy, whom she hides in a cave, while the blind old god swallows a stone in place of his child (since that day stones have been mansions of godhead in the Near East). The baby's whimpering is drowned by the clashing shields of faithful servants or, as one story has it, by the grunting of a foster sow. In Hesiod's narrative all this story concerns the city of Lyttus, to which the pregnant queen was sent by the kindly Earth Mother to wait her time; thence she set forth by night to bear in a cave of the neighbouring mountain a babe who would find the same cave convenient in later days. For to it, as Lucian tells us in his best manner, he led the maiden Europa, flushed and half suspecting; and there too the son, whom she conceived that day, would seek his Father when, another Moses, he wished to be the Lawgiver of his people. While the Cretans waited above (so runs the story), Minos descended into this Holy Grot, and when he reappeared with the Code, gave out that he had it of Zeus himself.

A primitive sanctuary, therefore, was to be looked for in some grot on Dicte, and by preference near Lyttus, whose scattered ruin lies on a spur of the north-western Lasithi peak, which is still climbed by a yearly pilgrimage and called the Lord's Mountain. In so well-defined an area such a cave, if any there were, must have been identified

long ago, had the upland fastnesses of Crete been any place for the scholarly explorer these many centuries past. But the Lasithi region, which excluded the Venetians and only once admitted the Turks in arms, long remained less known than even the rest of the island, and nothing was heard by the outer world of any cavern in Dicte till less than thirty years ago.

At last reports reached Candia touching a large double grot which is seen as a black spot on the hill-side above Psychró, a village of the inner Lasithi plain. It was said that shepherds, folding their flocks in it at night or in storm, grubbed up strange objects of bronze and terra-cotta from its black bottom mould. Their finding continued, and three years later the first archaeologists came to Psychró and recovered divers antiques from peasant hands—figurines of men and beasts, miniature battle-axes, knives and other weapons. They climbed, moreover, to the Cave itself, and scraped away the earth from its mouth in vain hope of uncovering such an altar as had existed without the Zeus grot on Ida; but inside they found little to do, so heavy was the cumber of fallen rocks in the upper hall. What they had recovered, however, was plainly part of a votive deposit, and the cave was marked holy and a prize for explorers to come.

Accordingly to Psychró I betook myself with a few trained men, stone-hammers, mining-bars, blasting powder, and the rest of a cave-digger's plant. The villagers proved willing, nay eager,

belying my fear that a cold reception awaited any one who came to poach that preserve of illicit searchers. Just then Lasithi, like all Crete, was anxious before all things to justify its new won freedom in European eyes, and Psychró was not less alive, than any other Greek village would have been, to the glory to be shed on its little self by notable discoveries in its Cave. Furthermore, from week to week the Prince High Commissioner was expected in Lasithi. He had announced that he would visit the Cave, and here in the nick of time was an Englishman offering to make, at his own charges, the needful path for the royal mules. Therefore, on a stormy morning, while the hillside was swept by clammy mists and half-frozen showers, I found no lack of hands to make me a zig-zag mule-track up five hundred feet of rock. The Psychró men, knowing that the path would serve them thereafter to bring down the black cave mould which the farmers of the plain prize above all top-dressings, finished it in less than a day; and while a camping ground was being levelled and embanked before the yawning mouth, we began to blast a way into the cave itself.

Let it be understood that this great cavern is double, having to right a shallow hall, and to left an abysmal chasm which is not unworthy to rank among the famous limestone grottoes of the world. The rock falls sheer at first, but, as the light grows dim, you find your feet on easier slopes, and can clamber down safely into the deeper dark-

ness. Having groped thus far, stand and burn a flare. In front an icy pool spreads from your feet far into the hill about the bases of fantastic stalactite columns, and hall opens out of hall, each with fretted roof and black unruffled floor, while behind and far above a spot of luminous haze shows the way you have come from the upper world. It is a fit scene for Minos' colloquy with his father Zeus, and for the cult of a chthonian God. To-day the hill-girt plain of Lasithi, laid level as a sand beach, drains to a stream which is sucked into darkness below an overhanging cliff, to reappear, perhaps, in certain large springs which rise among the northern roots of the hills ; but its floor, which is seen from above as a huge chequer-board, has not always been dry. A lake, lapping the mountain flanks five hundred feet above, once poured its overflow into the hill through the Cave of Psychró, and made it such a natural marvel as would appeal to the superstition of primitive peasants.

Blasting powder made short work of the boulders in the upper hall, whose threatening roof held good to the end, and crowbars and stone-hammers finished the work. In four strenuous days we had not only hewn a path into the upper hall, but cleared a large area of black mould, and the real search could begin. But preparations for further blasts had still to go on, with an incessant ringing of mining bars ; and what with their metallic din, reverberating from roof to walls, what with the heavy hanging fumes of powder and the mingled

reek of hot, unwashed men and chill, newly turned earth, we had no pleasant task in that dim, dripping cave. All soil was carried out of the dark up a steep incline; and to sifting it and washing the blackened potsherds which it contained was set a gang of women, who are always more patient in minute search than men, and less apt to steal. It is always well to have a few women among your diggers. The men labour better in their company, and with a vivacity which is of no small value where boredom spells failure. The day, which else might drag its slow length along, goes merrily in chatter and laughter, and the task is sought cheerfully at dawn, and not willingly left at eve. As a master of labour, I have met in Moslem lands with least reluctance from women. The Bedawi wives of the northern half tribe of Wuld Ali, which during the last fifty years has settled about the mounds of Gaif in the Nile Delta, came without the least demur to help their husbands and brothers dig Naukratis. They even brought their sucklings; and on the first day more than one mother tried to carry her basket of earth on one shoulder, while a brown babe nestled at her breast. As the poor mite received a deluge of sand in mouth and eyes whenever a load was tipped unhandily, I forbade babies in arms on the morrow; but no one seemed to understand why. In Cyprus, too, Turkish mothers flocked to our work, and their little girls, enlisted more for the pleasure of the sight of them than anything else, used to turn the Paphian Temple

into a riotous playground. But Eastern Christians are usually more prudish or more fearful, and I had expected that no Lasithi woman would work. Sure enough they proved coy, and at first would only watch from afar two trained girls brought up as lures from Cnossus; but on the third morning a cosmopolitan villager, who had fought—or looted—in France in 1870, sent up his wife and a daughter to help his son. The ice was broken. A laughing mob ran up the hill tossing sieves and clamouring to be listed, and with their sisters, cousins and aunts, who brought up the midday meals, made the terrace before our cave the gayest spot in Lasithi.

Above a thick bed of yellow clay, laid long ago by water, and productive only of bones and scraps of very primitive pottery, lay black earth five to seven feet deep at the back of the Upper Hall. It proved to hold countless burned things, and, also, many unburned offerings, which had been laid or dropped at all periods, from about the early classical age back to a dim antiquity, roughly coeval with the Twelfth Dynasty of Pharaohs. Bronzes from many moulds were hidden there, a little chariot, for example, drawn by an ox and a ram, unequally yoked; many miniature effigies of bulls and sheep; knives, pins, lance-heads, needles, and little necessities of the toilet; and also hundreds of clay cups, and some finely painted potter's work, and rough libation tables of stone. These lay thickest about a rude structure, bedded on the yellow clay, which was doubtless an altar of burnt sacrifice. The dark

innermost recess, shut off by a rough and ruinous wall, was shunned ; for the rock-roof was unsound above it, and great fragments overhung perilously. But when we ventured into it at the last, nothing worse happened than sudden thunderous slides of rock and earth, which at first sent the scared diggers scampering for their lives, but soon came to be held harmless. This sacrosanct area was soil untouched by the modern searcher, and it proved extraordinarily prolific in broken vases, mostly of painted ware, but less rich in metal things. To clear the whole Upper Hall took no more than a fortnight ; and I was well enough pleased on the whole when I gave it back to its flustered bats and owls. The altar and temenos wall had proved the place holy—nothing less, in all likelihood, than the Birth Cave itself.

It remained, however, to search the Lower Hall for objects that might have slipped down during the secret digging of the past fifteen years ; but I did not expect much spoil, since I was told that no native had ever found anything among these dim stalactite pillars except a few scraps of water-borne pottery. Unwilling and not hopeful, the men clambered down into the abyss, and the women especially, who had been working hitherto in sunshine at the Cave's mouth, moaned at sight of the clammy mud in which they must now stand and search by the smoky light of petroleum flares. But complaints soon ceased, as first one and then another picked a bronze out of the soil which had

lodged on the upper rock slopes. Two objects among the handfuls which I was called to collect from time to time were especially welcome, one a little statuette of the god of Egyptian Thebes (how came he there ? in the hand of an Egyptian or a Cretan devotee ?) ; the other a miniature battle-axe, earnest of more to come.

There was not room for all hands on the steep slope, and I bade a few of the best workers rake out the little pockets of lime-encrusted mud, which had been laid in cups and hollows of the lower stalagmitic floors. There, too, blades and pins were found ; and the pioneers, working down and down into the darkness till their distant lights shone no brighter than glow-worm lamps to the men above, reached the margin of the subterranean pool, and began to scrape the mud-slides left by the water as it shrinks in summer time into the hill. So much did this slime yield that some went on unbidden to dredge the shallows of the chill pool itself, and find there many rude bronze statuettes, male and female, nude and draped, vicarious deputies of worshippers who had wished to be specially remembered of the God ; and also signet gems and rings, pins and needles by the score.

By this time more than half the workfolk were splashing in the nether pool, -eager for the special rewards promised to lucky finders ; and the tale of bronzes had already been doubled. But Chance had reserved her crowning grace. A zealous groper, wishful to put both hands to his work, happened to

wedge his guttering candle in the fluting of a stalactite column, and by its light espied in the slit the green edge of a bronze blade. I passed the word to leave mud-larking in the pool and search the colonnades. Men and girls dispersed themselves along the dark aisles, and perching above the black waters on natural crockets of the pillars, peered into the flutings. They found at once—found blades, pins, tweezers, brooches; here and there an axe, and in some niches as many as ten votive things together. Most were picked out easily enough by the slim fingers of the girls; but to possess ourselves of others, which the lights revealed, it was necessary to smash stalactite lips that had almost closed in long ages. For about four hours we discovered at least an object a minute, chiefly on the columns at the head of the pool: but above the stature of a man nothing was anywhere found.

When nothing more could be seen in the crevices, which had been scrutinized twice and thrice, and we had dredged the pool's bed as far as wading men could reach, I called off the workers, who were falling sick of the damp and chill; and two days later we left silent and solitary the violated shrine of the God of Dicte. The digger's life is a surfeit of surprises, but his imagination has seldom been provoked so sharply as in that dim chasm. One seemed to come very near indeed to men who lived before history. As we saw those pillared isles, so with little change had the last worshipper, who

offered a token to Zeus, seen them three thousand years ago. No later life had obliterated his tracks ; and we could follow them back into the primaeval world with such stirring of fancy as one feels in the Desert, which is the same to-day as it was yesterday, and has been since the beginning of things.

I have never struck tents with sharper regret, for there could be no pleasanter abode than a camp on that rocky shelf of Dicte. All day handsome folk went and came, who dealt as honourably with the stranger as he wished to deal with them, showing neither distrust nor presumption, but a frank high-land gentility ; and as evening fell, they would turn merrily down the hill, only lingering to exchange a word or to load a mule with soil for the gardens below. By night we were alone, free and irresponsible as Bedawis, and far safer ; for in that distressful isle of Crete, where every peasant had his tale of rapine and murder in his own or his father's time, there was now no suspicion of fear. Sometimes the scourge of the Cretan spring, a hot Libyan gust, would swoop unheralded from the higher gullies, and send the cook's coals scurrying towards the big powder canister and himself in frantic chase, calling on the Virgin Mother ; and half a dozen times it seemed our tents must go by the sheer way to the village, whose lights twinkled five hundred feet below. But poles and ropes held out against the worst of the wind, and soon the moon rode again in a cloudless heaven, and the flags drooped motionless on their standards. So the night would

pass, and with the dawn the chatter be heard again, coming round the shoulder of the hill.

A year later I was camped still further east on the uttermost Cretan coast which looks towards the Levant sea. Broken pieces of painted vases had been found some time before about the mouth of a large pit near a little natural harbour, now known as the Bay of Zakro; and it had been observed that the vineyards on the lower slopes were embanked with walls of *primaeval* masonry. The bay was much frequented. Often I woke to find a dozen or so of small craft at anchor, whose sailors would land in the morning to draw water, seek the blessing of a priest, and be gone by noon. Some came to talk with me, declaring themselves strangers, sponge-divers, gathered from many coasts, but chiefly from the Isle of Symi. They were men of swarthy skin, somewhat boisterous, given to drinking and dicing, and bent on a merry life, because in their trade it is short. Zakro, said they, was their last customary port of call before they adventured over the broad strait to the Libyan fishing grounds. As they do now, so Cretans must have done in the days of Minos; and by trade, nearly four thousand years ago, Zakro grew so rich that it possessed some of the finest vases in the Aegean, and became cosmopolitan enough to use products of Syria and inner Asia.

I began to search my ground and reached the fourteenth of May by our reckoning, the second in

the older style. The weather had been boisterous for a fortnight past, and under some unseasonable influence shifting gales, lowering skies, and frequent rains had succeeded the serenity of April. A heavier fall than usual began that afternoon, and during the windless early hours of night grew to a tropical deluge. I was encamped in front of a large magazine, the only building upon the beach, about a quarter of a mile from the mouth of a river which comes down from the upland shelves of Sitía. The noble gorge of its middle course, cleft sheer as a Pacific cañon, was set, when I saw it first, so thick with old trees and tangled undergrowth, that a man could scarcely pass along its floor; but in the broad upper valley, above high-water mark, corn-plots, orchards, and terraced gardens flourished abundantly; and the deltaic plain about the mouth was even more fertile.

Presently I had to abandon the tent, though it had been proof against former rains, and seek sleep in the rat-ridden magazine. Its mud roof was leaking apace, and the four dripping walls dismally reflected the lamplight; but, thankful for even such shelter, I fell asleep. I woke to hear a fierce hiss of wind and rain driving on the sea-front of the building, and knew by the roaring of breakers that an onshore gale had risen during the night. It was grey-dark, and, striking a light to see how long it might be still to sunrise, I wondered to find the hour past already, and day dismally come.

For lack of anything better to do, I tried to sleep

again ; but my Greek servants, moving restlessly about the building, infected me with their uneasiness. Though the magazine was built on shingle and sand, it lay so far out of the course in which the river had flowed for centuries, that there could hardly be danger where we were, however damp our discomfort. But the untimely gloom, riven by the fitful shimmer of lightning, the steady splash of rain, reinforced by cascades of driven sea-spray, and the intermittent thunder, heard even above the ceaseless roar of breakers rolling to my threshold, were not heartening. Water stood deep on the plain behind ; but it was finding its own outlets to the sea, and I took more heed of the deluge overhead, which so thoroughly had penetrated the mud roof, that we were compelled to disturb the careful order of stores and baggage and the results of my digging, and collect all under waterproof sheets in the middle of the magazine.

I was making a cold and sodden breakfast, when I heard suddenly a shout, ‘ The river ! The river ! ’ I splashed outside, and, wading to the south end of the long windowless building, saw that the flooded surface of the plain behind had begun to flow as one stream. Torrents, growing momentarily stronger and deeper, swept round each end of the magazine, under-cutting its shallow foundations ; and even as I looked, a crack ran like a lightning fork down the masonry of the north end. It opened ever so little, and I watched my kitchen slide into the flood noiselessly ; for nothing was to be heard above the

roaring of sky and sea. It was high time to be gone. In the farther chamber of the magazine a mare was standing, but mad with terror of the lightning and water, she would not budge, even when one wall of her stable followed the kitchen; and after a frantic struggle she had to be left to her fate. I plunged with the stable boy into the northern mill-race and staggered through; but the overseer and the cook, who lingered a moment to search for a much-loved pinfire gun under the ruins of the kitchen, found the water already too deep and strong, and had to wait for a life-line; whereof the cook lost his hold, and was all but swept to the sea. Fortunately, the higher ground was not far distant, and to it we all fled.

For the next two hours, wet to the skin—and feeling, too, as if wet from skin to skin—we had to crouch in what shelter we might, and watch the ruin of the valley. The deluge from the skies never abated a moment, and the solid earth seemed to melt. Where yesterday a foot had rung on the flinty hillside, it now sank ankle-deep. The very heart of the storm was hanging over us. Lightnings forked ceaselessly on one hand or the other, and each thunder-peal confused the echo of the last. The gale, a full-bodied ‘Levanter’, was still freshening; and under its awful lash the seas, stained red with the ruin of the fields, reared higher and higher against the boiling race which the land was pouring in. The river now filled the whole valley from hill to hill, here sliding with swift,

malignant smoothness, there, broken by some obstacle or penned in a sunken gully, heaving, shouldering, writhing and tossing turbid waves one across another. Gnarled planes and centenarian holm-oaks from the river gorge, with olives and charubs, telling the fate of the higher gardens and orchards, rode past us in an endless tumult—all horribly tangled with horned carcasses, which were sucked spinning below, to be spewed up again and swept to the sea. It was a Homeric combat between flood and flood. Great trees, hurled into the jaws of the breakers, reared, plunged, and broke back like hunted monsters of the deep; till at last, where offshore the forces of propulsion and resistance neutralized each other, they gathered in an ever-broadening vortex and still found no peace.

During the last hour of the storm the gale seemed to master all the other cataclysmal forces. The southern point of the bay, where a reef sheers up in jagged iron cliffs, provoked the most horrid turmoil; and, above all rival sounds of land and sky, came down wind a ceaseless roar of riotous seas, leaping to the summit of the rocks. Two misty trails streamed far inland like smoke from chimney stacks on the summit of the cliff. They were, of course, storm-cataracts caught in their leap and whirled to spray; but the Cretans, who watched with me, finding any wonder credible in that convulsion of all nature, would have it that the central fires of earth had broken out; and I doubt not they

still add that crowning portent to their tales of an unforgotten day.

While the tremendous spectacle continued, none of us gave much thought to his own miserable state. We cowered to watch how primaeval earth was once carved. When the veil of rain was withdrawn at last, I saw the face of the landscape changed. The old estuary of the river existed no more ; and a broad and shallow mouth had been opened far to the north. The bay, which since Spratt's visit in the 'fifties had afforded deep anchorage close inshore, now shoaled gradually for a mile, and was studded with the toppling crests of grounded trees ; and the mile-long strand of pebbles and grassy dunes had been replaced by a stretch of mud at a level some six feet lower. Over two-thirds of the plain, where fertile fields and olive gardens had been, lay sand and stones ; and such trees as had held their ground were buried to mid-trunk. Looking up the river gorge, I saw nothing but naked rock, where terraced vineyards had clothed the cliff face ; while all the ancient tangle of forest below had vanished to the last shrub, and the sinuous valley-floor, as far as the eye could follow it, glistened clean as a city pavement after rain.

When the flood had subsided, a part of the shell of my magazine was found standing, saved by the yielding of the beach to right and left ; and the mare, quite unhurt, shivered still in the only remaining corner of her roofless stable. My personal loss

was not so very great. I had to find new quarters, repair much that was broken, and put up with the loss of many stores and utensils, but of nothing absolutely indispensable to the camp. But if I had come off lightly on the whole, not so had the natives of the valley. Its single village, when the Headman came to make his official report, was found to have lost thousands of fruit-trees, many score head of live stock, and a number of houses and farm buildings. Communication with the rest of the island was cut by the washing out of paths, made with the labour of years; and the best springs of drinking water were smothered under a landslide. Since all irrigated fields and gardens whatsoever, which had been terraced along the stream, had been swept away, the villagers had lost not only the crops of the year, nor only the fruit of their trees for several years to come, nor only the trees themselves, but also the precious, irretrievable soil on which there could be growth again. The sum of their disaster came to this. Almost all members of a community of poor husbandmen, who had nothing but their lands to look to, had lost in a few hours all that they possessed over and above the barest means of subsistence. For many years to come they would have no more than the scanty produce of their higher and thinner fields to live upon. If thanks to the communism of Eastern society none would starve, none would be able to grow for himself, or have the means to procure, a seasoning of his daily bread. The slow increase of many

generations past was lost to a generation to come. The village, as it seemed to me, was ruined.

Cut off all that day by the river, we could only guess what had happened in the upper valley ; but on the morrow two or three of the villagers, who had held lands in the lower plain, forded the falling stream at their peril, and came down to us. Their tale set one's imagination playing over the dull hopelessness of their outlook, over the state of men, yesterday prosperous, to-day face to face with the prospect of a bitter, inevitable struggle for mere bread, their hope of joy in life abandoned, and their local pride, so keenly felt in Greek village society, for ever abased. To my Western thinking such a fate seemed worse than death. Could nothing be done ? I was the single individual in the valley with any superfluity, and I represented a foreign Society, whose duty and right it was to help. If I could not recover their trees or put back their soil, I could still do what the Briton always does in such emergencies—write a cheque. So word was sent up to the Headman that I proposed to offer a certain sum to the village, if he would tell me how it would be spent.

Next day the lower ford was just passable, and I rode across country—for the path was gone—to see what I might. Every glimpse into the gorge from above showed how completely destroyed was its ancient forest, the most valuable and rare possession of a Cretan village. As the valley opened out and our way lay through wrecked olive gardens,

now dreary stretches of drying mud, on whose caked surface sand was beginning to swirl in the breeze, I saw that the tree-stumps were banked up on their higher side with a matted scum of broken boughs, of corn uprooted in the green ear and of other ruin of the valley lands ; while stranded boulders and stones were strewn so thick on once fertile fields as to make all seem one broad river-bed.

In the village I found several houses destroyed, and men still labouring to clear others of the mud left by the collapse of their roofs. I was invited to go on to the Mill and see what evil work the flood had done there. The coffee-house emptied itself behind me of some twenty men, to whom were added presently half the women and children of the village, all surprisingly cheerful, and vying with one another to be first to point out this or that result of the disaster. God had willed it ! So each murmured piously at the end of a tale, which lost nothing in the manner of its telling. The principal sufferers were brought forward, and plainly were proud to be so distinguished. They, too, said modestly that God had willed it. The mill proved to be no more ; and the miller pointed out its situation with so manifest a pleasure that I almost suspected, absurdly enough, that the blessing of excessive insurance was not unknown in remote Cretan villages.

Returned to the coffee-house, I found still less to feed my pitiful mood. Seven men in ten of the company were there, because they had no longer

any lands to till ; but the outward demeanour of each and all was not such as one looked for in despairing men. Nor, if I am any judge of behaviour (and these were very simple folk), was the heart of the Zakriotes heavy within them, while they talked so cheerfully. The story of the day before yesterday was told again and again, with fresh effects added to taste, and always with that pious refrain about the will of God—a story of something past and done with, no longer taken into account for the present or the future.

I rose with emotion not a little chastened, and went to the Headman. He was writing out his report to the local prefecture, and laid down his pen to relate with sparkling eyes the narrow escape of his own family from a torrent which had come right through a house higher up the hill-side. But when I referred to my proposed gift, he showed less interest. If I had looked to play Lord Bountiful in Zakro, I had missed my mark. The man was evidently as much embarrassed as grateful. It was not easy, he said, to spend such a sum on the village as a whole. None was worse off than another. All were poor men. What did I wish to do myself ? The church would be the better for a belfry. I was taken aback, having proposed to myself something of more eleemosynary sort. Or should the water of a certain spring be brought down in pipes ? Neither was this just what I had expected ; but caring more to add to fountains in a thirsty land than to ecclesiastical luxuries, I voted

for the pipes, and handed over my dole, not so much, after all, in pity for stricken men as dislike of being worse than my word.

Those peasants, perhaps, had feigned a little, as a Greek will, half unconsciously, if there be a chance to plume himself, even on misery. But I saw and heard much of them after their excitement had long passed and they were grown both familiar with me and fully aware of the measure of their loss; yet still undismayed, they held on their simple way after, as before, a disaster which would have crushed or maddened northern husbandmen. Nor was their mood either callous or light. The peasant Greek is neither brute nor butterfly; but this he is—a man who is essentially inert, a man born physically outworn. The whole race, as it seems to me, is suffering from over-weariness. It lived fast in the forefront of mankind very long ago, and now is far gone in years; and in its home you feel that you have passed into the shadow of what has been, into an air in which men would rather be than do.

No doubt, also, the passivity common to most tillers of the earth reinforced the inborn nature of the Zakriotes. The husbandman is of all men the most apt to surrender to the discretion of Heaven and take its blows without thought whether they be deserved. Slave of the soil which he turns, to it he looks for all his being. What it gives him from year to year may vary in degree but not in kind. Much or little, it is always food. To be poor or rich is to have his belly better filled or worse;

and, eating to live, he lives to eat only on a rare day of festival. So his customary toil, than which he knows no other business of his day, give him enough food, the shortening of it, or the loss of its variety will affect him less than a being of more complex life would think possible. Actual starvation he has not felt, and knows he will never feel, so long as his neighbour has food. His joys are found, not outside his day's work, but in its course—in the satisfaction of bodily appetite, in drinking when he is athirst, in sleeping when he is weary, in warming himself in God's sun, in cooling himself in the shade, in communing with his fellows, his wife and his babes. What should such a man know of the superfluities which we call wealth?

Simple though the Zakriotes were, they showed often in their talk that they knew themselves well enough to be preoccupied with this very question of their racial decay. Why, they were for ever asking me, had the Greeks fallen out of that front rank in which the schoolmaster told them they once marched? How came the 'barbarians' of Europe to be now, nation for nation and man for man, so superior to the once Chosen Race? The processes of generation and birth, processes which, whether in man or beast, are never out of the thoughts or the talk of southern folk, were canvassed to show cause. Their maidens, they said, were betrothed as children, wedded at fourteen, and mothers in the course of months. They had heard that we discouraged wedlock before the age of sixteen.

Had they not better do so too ? There was talk of a League of Hellenic Ladies to promote mature marriage, and the Headman's wife, who twirled her spindle and bore her waterpot aloft among the rest, but with a statelier grace, wished to join it. Zakro had long been famous among Cretan villages for the easy delivery of mothers. There a woman was not held to have done herself credit if she let the midwife be in time. But what did I think ? Did such easy bearing mean weak babes ? I told the Headman's lady how hardly it went with the delicate mothers of my own land, and she scarcely believed. Like Bedawis, who will halt but an hour on the march while a wife is delivered behind a spear-propped screen of cloaks, so too the peasant mothers of the Near East make little trouble of bringing to birth. John Barker, consul in Aleppo, has told how once among the Syrian hills he halted with his wife for the night at a hut, whose mistress was plainly very near her time. In the morning the housewife gathered the family linen to wash it in the stream a thousand feet below, and, deaf to the English lady's protests, went off down the gorge. At sunset her figure was seen coming slowly up the path again, the new-washed linen on her head, the new-born babe in the crook of her arm.

I keep a very kindly memory of Zakro, despite its water fouled by the flood, despite the stench which came up from the lightly sanded carcasses, despite the myriad mosquitoes of its shore. There was a tepid sea to bathe in morn and eve ; there

were fair slopes, unpeopled but not too wild, to ride over on Sabbaths and holidays ; there was peace from the post and the political Greek ; and there were half a score of buried brick houses of Minoan time to be explored, with all their contents, as well as pits and tombs and caves, which yielded me their secrets. I stayed till it was high summer, and what were left of barley fields were white already to harvest.

CHAPTER VIII

NILE FENS

THE Delta is unexplored by the thousands who seek their pleasure winter by winter on the Nile, although a glimpse of the fringe of its fens is every one's earliest and most vivid impression of Egypt. As the train speeds south from Alexandria, a vista slips past of level meres and copper-green fields and ant-hill villages breaking the line of an amber sky. More at leisure, between Port Said and Ismailia, you may look from the hurricane-deck over silent lagoons, where flocks of wader birds stand at gaze, or trail like far-blown smoke across the setting sun.

Twice I have gone for a sojourn of some weeks into the western fens, to glean, after another's harvesting, upon the mounds of Gaif, where King Amasis made the Greeks build a very naughty city. It is a water-logged, ill-smelling spot, whose every detail is ugly or mean ; but the large sunlit spaces around made one careless of the foreground, and even in this the eye was content with the shapely Wuld Ali thieves who roam the mounds, and, if one lodged at the sheikh's of the northern hamlet, with his daughter, Ayesha. She was as wild a maid as ever scoured pans for a Coptic cook and served two dusty diggers at their meat. She had the features of a Scopas head, the eyes of a frightened hare, and the wrists, hands, ankles, and feet of the

purest breed of man. She was tattooed on brow and cheek and chin ; the hue of her only robe was a smear of all the cakes in a paintbox ; and she would rarely speak. When she did break silence, it was to ask for something in coin or kind towards the dowry, for lack of which she was ageing at eighteen. The last time I visited Gaif, I heard she had been lifted at length to a bridal bower on camel-back, and had followed a Bedawi lord to the desert, as a sheikh's daughter should. All luck and love be with her !

I had visited the fens, however, before I saw Gaif, having once ridden into them from Alexandria, when I was ranging the neighbourhood for buried Greek cities. Much was being said then of a mound lying beyond the swamps of Mariut, in a district almost without villages—a desolate doubtful tract of sour desert fringe, through which a pioneer canal had lately been dug. Some kind of farm was said to exist near this *tell*, tenanted by a party of Frenchmen ; and no sooner had the good offices of an Alexandrian friend made me known to one of them, than I was bade cordially to come as I was and stay as long as I pleased. The farm-hands should attend me, cook for me and dig, and camels and Arab steeds would wait my pleasure. But I caught the accent of Tarascon, and when I left Alexandria a few days later, it was with both horses and a servant of my own.

A dislocated omnibus train put me down at a shed in the marsh-land, whence a path led westward

through cultivated lands, and among hamlets, standing high on their proper ruin. After a halt at noon beneath a stunted palm, we passed into a region where man still fought a drawn battle with sand and water. Here he had won a long stretch, embanked it, washed it, and raised in triumph his clover and cotton ; but there the salt flood had slopped into his canal, and ridge and furrow were once more barren sand. After a while, flakes of mud began to appear among the green. The ditches, fringed with salt growths and clogged with weed, spread themselves out in muddy sloughs, and at last the main canal died away in a chain of rank reedy hollows. *Fellahin* yielded place to rare Bedawi goat-herds, and mud hovels to their black tents, pitched sparsely on sand-spits or dusty *tells*. The Frenchmen's house soon loomed in sight, set on one of these mounds high above the vast level ; but not far short of it the path broke off at a black and unbridged drain, and when we had found a crossing, and floundered through slime to the gate of the compound, it wanted but two hours to sunset. My friend's mares, mules, and camels were evidently out at pasture, for through the frequent gaps in the mud wall I could see no more than a rotting cart, some hens standing forlorn on greasy islets, and a few ducks more at their ease. The farm-house cried aloud for repair. Its roof gaped ; in the windows was more paper than glass, and the balcony would not have borne up a dog. The gate of a shaggy garden swung wide on one hinge,

and we clattered in unremarked by so much as a cat. No human being was visible, and as none answered to knock or call, I pushed the door, and found myself in a room of all work. The table showed that here, as in Wonderland, there was no time to wash teacups between meals; nor, apparently, had a figure, sitting somnolent beside it, with bandaged head and eye, and a torn shirt and ragged breeches for all its clothing, found more time to wash itself. The strange being blinked a single bloodshot eye, staggered to its feet, and regarded me unsteadily. Then intelligence dawned, and yelling, 'Jules! Jules!' it seized me by hand and waist, and asked with affectionate solicitude what I would take—wine, beer, cognac, or champagne? A glance at the bottle on the table suggested a more local liquor. My host was hurt. Why not beer or champagne? Well, if it must be *mastica*, there it was of Scio, the best. And in his own cloudy glass he presented me with sheer unabashed potato spirit, which, taken unwarily, grips the gullet and deprives one of speech and breath.

A clatter of loose heels on the stairs heralded Jules. It was my little friend of Alexandria, evidently just out of bed. As I shook his hand I heard a gurgling sound behind, and was conscious that the common glass had been filled and emptied again. Jules placed his bed at my disposal, sheets and all, as they were, and apparently as they had been for many nights. Victor passed the *rakí*

repeatedly, and drank a glass for every one I refused. Both upbraided me in chorus for having brought horses, where those animals were as the sand of the sea in multitude. But none the less, on visiting the compound at sundown to seek a standing for my animals, I found a single weedy mare in the one shed; and various windy proposals resulted in my stallion being tethered to the decadent cart in the open. Presently he freed himself, and, being foiled in a gallant effort to reach the mare through the roof of her shed, took incontinently to the marsh, and amused four Bedawi catchers until the moon rose. Two days later, when I wanted an extra baggage animal, I moved heaven and earth, and hardly obtained one mangy camel.

In the meanwhile, if only to stem the tide of alcohol, I had proposed to Jules that he should show me the *tell*, which rose hard by the farm. He replied that it stretched as far as the eye could see, and that to enumerate the marvellous things upon it would take the night; but, if I wished it, we might go as far as the foot. The path led through a group of Bedawi hovels, backed against the wall of the compound. There, said Jules, dwelt his men; but the manner of the retainers' salute did not savour of feudal respect. A hurried step sounded behind us, and I turned to see a third European. He offered a cordial but hasty hand, and passed on ahead, shouldering a heavy staff. Halting as we halted, and moving when we moved, he kept his distance. Ever and anon tufts of herbage caught

his eye, and, with curses in French, Italian, or Arabic, or all three tongues at once, he battered them furiously with the staff. I turned wondering towards Jules, who whispered, 'Serpents!' Few tufts escaped, and while I walked about the Mound, this Patrick was accounting for reptiles innumerable; but alas! hydra-like they lived again as fast as he slew.

The whole *tell* was seen in half an hour. It was quite featureless, rotten with salt and of no promise to a digger. Granite blocks crumbled to shingle, and brick walls to powder at a touch. The aspect of the site was as melancholy as all the landscape about it—as the sour grey herbage, the brackish flood-waters, and the plough-lands relapsed to waste. No creak of water-wheels or splash of sluices broke the evening silence; but rotting frames stood gaunt against the sky, adding a sadness even to the desolation of nature.

The sun was down when we returned to the farm, but no food was set out, nor to all appearance was any being made ready. But there was more than enough *rakí*. Victor made merriment for the party. He had cost in his time 30,000 francs to the Egyptian Government—moneys paid for his higher education at Paris in the glorious days of Ismail. 'There you are!' cried Jules. 'There's 30,000 francs—a bargain!'; and the failure seemed to enjoy the inexhaustible jest as much as any one else. I began to glean something of the past of the queer crew. The four—for yet another lurked in the house,

invisible and suffering, they said, from *coup de soleil*—seemed to have held posts of profit, if not honour, on Khedivial backstairs. The farm had come to Jules from his father; but there was a long tale of water-wars with neighbouring owners and trouble with the Bedawis, of mortgages, encroachments, domiciliary visits from irrigation officials, and difficulties with tax-gatherers—all these being main incidents in the history of the surrender of three parts of the land to water and salt. The fourth part was let out to Bedawis, on whose camels or buffaloes violent hands had to be laid whenever any rent was due. The dykes and bridges had gone the way of the farmhouse, and the day seemed near when barbarism would resume an undisputed sway.

Rakí is, if anything, an appetizer, and always a most unsatisfactory substitute for supper; but as the latter was not forthcoming, I was obliged to ask when and by what the pangs of hunger were to be stayed. Jules was astonished that he had not thought of supper earlier, but what could he do? Victor was cook, and Victor, it was not to be denied, was drunk. I called up my own servant, and told him to cook what he could find. Jules pronounced the idea original and admirable, and sup we did at last on potatoes and milk and bread and a tin or so of conserves from my saddle-bags. Vague associations of the past made Victor clutch now and then at my fork and spoon, only to forget them again and return to nature's tools. With *rakí* once

more on the board, I waived ceremony, and sought upstairs the sleep in which two of the party were sunk already where they sat. But it was long in coming. Like a traveller in an eighteenth-century inn, I had better say that I 'lay' that night with myriads of companions as sleepless as myself. But at some late hour I did lose consciousness only to regain it as the level beams of the sun shot through the open window. The first object of my waking vision was the unkempt Victor, whose lying down and rising up were carried out evidently with as little ceremony as his dog's. He sat with an eye to a battered telescope, and in reply to my salutation murmured an apology for being in the room, but did not avert his gaze.

Little loth to leave the bed, I stood behind him and tried to discover what he spied; but nothing did my field-glass show, except swamp and sand. Begging a peep through his spyhole, I saw more clearly the same sand and swamp, with here and there a ditch in land once drained and probably cultivated, now glistening salt and wet in the early sun; but no stock, not even a grazing camel, and no human life. Evidently in better days Victor had watched his labourers from afar, and now could not pass his fuddled hours otherwise than in gazing where the labourers had been. He was a cheerless spectacle in the first glory of morning—a ragged figure in an unswept room with cobwebbed walls, spying phantom harvests on a salt-marsh, and the ghosts of departed hinds.

The succeeding day proved less irksome, for I spent it mostly in the sun and air, riding to various mounds, large and small. Returning at sunset, I found all as the night before ; and I suppose, day in and day out, Victor sits still at his spyglass, or sleeps off *rakí* upstairs ; the Serpent-slayer fights his elusive foes ; and the Invisible Man remains invisible. In the dawn of the third day Jules embraced me ; the man with the staff went before, beating the bushes to the boundary of the farm ; and Victor, who had pledged himself, as one granting a dying man's request, to keep the telescope trained upon us, till we should dip below the horizon, no doubt fulfilled his word.

We rode back in one long day to Alexandria by a rarely travelled track round the western end of the Mariut lagoon. It is the road on which Napoleon's legions, marching to Damanhur, nearly perished of thirst ; but we were to fall into no such peril, for, as the afternoon wore on, rain came up from the sea and soaked the very bones of us. Through the mist of driving storm I could see little of the desolate land, which used to be set so thick with the Mareotic vines, and nothing of the lake, except turbid wavelets chasing each other to the shallow marge. The dour Arabs of the district, who have often given trouble, had all gone to ground, and we hardly passed a house, except one or two outposts of the Slavery Prevention Service. Slithering and stumbling, the horses climbed at sunset on to the Mariut causeway, and it was the third hour of night

before we sighted the flares in the noisome bazars of Gabbári.

I went back to the Delta some eighteen months after I had done with Crete, wishing to visit the most remote part of it, the stretch of fen and lagoon along the Mediterranean seaboard which divides Nile from Nile. This is a region apart from the rest of Egypt, and difficult to penetrate even by boat. More than half of it is inundated by stagnant waters of the great river, which are dammed by a broad belt of dunes; and the land is fouled by the drainage of salt soils and by the inflowing sea. Along the shore-line itself lies an almost continuous chain of great lagoons; and for a long day's journey south of these the land is still deep marsh, rotten with the overflow of forgotten canals and lost arms of Nile, almost trackless, and only beginning here and there to undergo the first process of reclamation.¹

In their present state, as might be expected, the fens have very few inhabitants; and perhaps none of the sparse hamlets, now found on the southern fringe, is much older than the nineteenth century. Such as they are, they seem to have grown up round lonely farmsteads, and still bear the names of gentry, who, not above a generation or two ago, were living far to southward. When the Egyptian people numbered not half its present strength, under the rule of the last Mameluke Beys,

¹ In the spring of 1903. Much reclamation has been effected since.

there was no reason to attempt the conquest of saline and water-logged soils ; and tradition remembers a not distant day—not more distant than Mehemet Ali's reign—when these fens still offered a sure, if uncomfortable, refuge to broken men who would escape the Pasha's levies, or had deserted from the battalions that were ever being sent to die in Arabia, the Sudan or Syria. The repute of the northern marshes remained indeed what it had been in the fifth century after Christ, when Heliodorus, in the opening scene of his *Aethiopic Romance*, described an amphibious outlawed folk living there by fishing and raiding. For persecuted Christians at least the marshes were a safer refuge even than the Desert, and the lone convent of Gemiana was an Egyptian Ely. I saw a poor Moslem woman bowing and muttering before the icon of Our Lady in its church, and asked what she did there. 'They all come,' said the monk with a shrug. 'Why should she not ? Her son is sick.'

To some memory of this old order of things must be due the timid and surly manner which even now the inhabitants of the few older hamlets maintain. Here alone in modern Egypt *felláh* women will bar their doors at sight of a stranger, while the children run to hide among the reeds or scrub. Even grown men, met in the way, hold aloof like Bedawis, till assured of your character and purpose. Although the wild boar is certainly not to be found there now, many natives assert that they have seen it in past years ; and twice I have come on stories even

of the hippopotamus, stories told by men too savage to have learned them from foreign mouths. And why should they not have the fact from their fathers? There is good warrant for a hippopotamus having been killed in the Northern Delta in 1818.

To visit this region you quit the Berari train, which crosses mid-Delta from Dessuk on the one Nile to Sherbin on the other, at any of its halts, but best at Kafr es-Sheikh or Belkas; for thence roads have been made northward towards the limit of settled life. This is soon reached except along the banks of the old Nile arms, where clusters of huts succeed each other till almost within sight of the Lagoons. These tiny hamlets are built of mud in such fantastic pepper-pot forms as will throw off the frequent rains, and, seen afar, they seem the work of gigantic building insects. Beyond them nothing appears ahead but the great saline flats, and vision is limited only by the curve of the globe. The monotonous surface is varied by many pools, which shrink slowly as the spring advances, leaving broad plains cracked like a crocodile's hide, and always treacherous where seeming dry; for under thin crusts, white with efflorescent salt, lie depths of black saturated sand. Elsewhere the level is broken by soapy sand-hummocks, heaped upon shrubs or clumps of reeds; slough succeeds to slough, and the going for many miles, at its best, is worse than on loose chalk-land at the breaking of a long frost. A sense of death broods over all this spongy salt tract, which melts into water under

your heel. Nothing breaks the spell—not the many birds shocking in their tameness ; not the myriad mosquitoes which pursue a traveller luckless enough to ride down wind ; not the teeming life of the ditches ; not the half-wild buffaloes, strayed from southern farmsteads, which you startle from their wallows, and send souging knee-deep through the slime ; not even the tireless north wind which lashes the huddled reeds. Yet with all its sameness and deadness one likes the land. The breeze blows hard and clear off sea and lagoon—hard and clear, as through bolt-ropes about a mast—and the flats have the mysterious charm of all large and free horizons.

To the soapy bogs and salt lagoons fall drains and canals, which have sprung far up the Delta to die unregarded at last under the face of the dunes ; and there is also a network of forgotten waterways of Ptolemaic and Roman days which now wander unguided. Half a day will often be spent in seeking a ford from one of their crumbling banks to the other. Sometimes you must strip under a noonday sun among the ever wakeful mosquitoes ; at other times, but rarely, you may be ferried in the log-boat of a marshman, son of former outlaws, who spends his days afishing and his nights prone under just such a bee-hive shelter of reeds and mud as a lake-dweller built in the age of stone. Heliodorus, who wrote of boats ‘rudely hewed out of the rough tree’, which crept about these channels in A.D. 400, saw the fenland much as it all was till lately and

as it still is in the remote parts of Menzaleh. Thus he wrote, as Underdowne has rendered him.

The whole place is called the Pasture of the Egyptians, about the which is a lowe valley, which receiveth certaine exundations of Nylus, by means whereof it becometh a poole, and is in the midst very deepe, about the brimmes whereof are marishes or fennes. For looke, as the shore is to the Sea, such is the Fennes to every great Poole. In that place have the theeves of Egypt, how many soever they bee, their common wealth. And for as much as there is a little land without the water, some live in small cottages, others in boates which they use as wel for their house as for passage over the poole. In these doe their women serve them, and if need require, be also brought to bedde. When a child is borne first, they let him suck his mother's milk a while, but after they feede him with fishes taken in the lake and roasted in the hot sunne. And when they perceive that he beginnes to goe, they tie a cord about his legs, and suffer him but onely to goe about the boate. . . . Moreover the great plenty of reede that groweth there in the moozy ground is in a manner as good as a bulwark to them. For by devising many crooked and cumbrous wayes, through which the passage to *them* by oft use is very easie, but to *others* hard, they have made it as a sure defence, that by no sudden invasion they may be endammaged.

Yet once there were towns in this sodden land, which raised not only corn to stay the hunger of Rome, but vines and olives. Some two score mounds, covering as many ruins, rise out of the maze of irrigation channels and choked drains, and you may see still the bed-stones of oil-presses and

faint traces of ridge and furrow on higher lying patches. It is a mystery how men ever lived and tilled in a land, whither one would surely say

no man comes

Nor hath come since the making of the world.

For those husbandmen of the Roman time had no pumps, and their drainage must have been by natural flow. Has all the Delta sunk slowly since their day, even as its shore has plainly been sinking at Alexandria ever since the Ptolemaic buildings, which are now awash in the eastern bay, were built high and dry on Lechaeum ?

Even on the margin of the great northern lagoons, where Heliodorus' *ichthyophagi* still survive, you can ride nowhere far without happening on ancient tracks of civilized man. Basins hollowed for flat-bottomed shipping, and silted canals with broken dykes, mock again and again your sanguine hope of a bee-line to some far-seen tell. Arrived at last, after many a false turn and lure of cheating mirage, you will find no imposing ruin ; for in this region builders used little except brick, and the most of it adobe. But the surface will prove to be strewn with vitreous slags, left by Arabs, who have burnt what stone there was for lime ; with fragments of iridescent glass, that vies with the green hues of copper scraps and coins ; with sherds of crumbling blue faience and red earthenware. It is meagre loot after so much toil through bog and soapy sand ; nor is much more to be got by digging at a venture. The mounds are made mostly of little adobe houses,

piled one on another, and rotted through and through with salt; and below these, if you are hopeful enough to dig, you will pass through some feet of empty sand, compressed to the consistency of asphalt, only to find at the bottom a core of black Nile mud, heaped by the first builders to raise their town above the damp of the surrounding flats. Now and again the newly come natives, who dig in these mounds for nitrous earth, which exists on all ancient sites by the Nile, or for ready-made bricks, have turned up drums or capitals of small columns, an inscription or two, or even a Roman sculpture—trophies all of an Empire, under whose rule Egypt was tilled more widely than even at this day. But these are rare rewards.

The lagoons lie farther yet, and, if you would see them well, you must sail before the summer heats in a boat of the lightest draught down one of the greater canals of the Delta. When the last lock has been left far behind, you pass beyond all hamlets into an amphibious Limbo where no life of man abides. The canal has no longer dykes on either hand, and its rims sink below your gunwale. Drop down a mile or two more. The flood brims bank high and slops on to the flats, and, before you are well aware, the Nile land has slid under its own waters. You are out on a Lagoon, boundless and bottomless to all appearance, so low are its shores, and so turbid its harassed waves. Yet, in fact, when a tall man lets himself down in mid-lake, the ripples will hardly wash his breast.

Holding on your course, you find that you have passed out of the dead world of the fens into one of teeming life. The aspect of the northernmost hamlet on the canal may have forewarned you; for scores of fishing nets were spread there to wind and sun, near a little fleet of keelless craft, and a Copt was selling to all comers the last night's draught of fish. The catch of each crew was offered in gross. A salesman, squatting on a mat, stirred the throbbing pile, working the larger fish to the top. A fat one he put by in a palm-leaf pannier for the Copt, a second for his writer, a third for himself; and the residue was bid for at ten, twenty, forty piastres, sold, packed on asses, and driven off to be marshmen's food for many miles around. The fishy wealth of the Lagoon is amazing. Silvery shapes leap in air by tens and twenties, and passing shoals leave wakes in every direction. Boats at anchor, boats adrift, boats under full sail, multiply as one runs northward; and out of the horizon spring groves of poles crossed by poles aslant—masts and yards of invisible hulls moored by invisible islets, whose sandy levels are all but awash. There must be hundreds of craft plying on Lake Burullos, and its fisher-folk are legion—men of blond colouring, active and somewhat silent, with the refined facial type common to old inbred races. Their women often recalled to me pictures that I had seen on the Pharaonic monuments.

The farther shore does not begin to rise on the north-eastern horizon till a dozen barren islets have

slipped astern. The higher dunes emerge first, uplifted in a shimmering mirage, roseate and yellow like cumulus lit by sunset. One into another they run, till they become a continuous range, spotted with black tufts, which are the plumes of half-buried palms. A cluster of huts to the left, with square upstanding blocks, is the village of Borg, whose dismantled fort and coastguard station mark the shrunken Sebennytic estuary of Nile. Rank odours of curing come down the wind from drying grounds which supply half the poor of Lower Egypt. On the starboard bow, as you wear round the last island and set a course due east, a large dark stain resolves itself into a little town distinguished by a minaret or two, and set on a hillock backed by golden dunes and palms. A forest of naked masts and yards bristles on the lake. It is the fleet of Baltim, chief settlement of the fisher-folk, and the old see of Parallos.

The lake floor has so slight a slope that a mile from its marge the water is still only inches deep, and grounded feluccas must discharge their freights on to camels, trained against nature to receive their loads standing and wade unconcerned to the shore. Naked children splash all day in the shoal-water, plying tiny javelins and little casting-nets, so far out that they seem no bigger than gulls; and I have seen no healthier or happier babes than this amphibious brood, whose playground is the Lagoon. Their fathers and mothers seem to pass the day on the vast stretch of sandy

beach, coopering boats, buying and selling fish, chattering, sleeping in the sun. It is astonishing to see so clean a life in Egypt, a life unfouled by the viscous ink of the Nile mud. Even the huts are not built of clay, but of ancient Roman bricks dug out of mounds south of the Lagoon, and long ago mellowed to a dusky red that tones to admiration with yellow dunes and the dark greenery of palms. Bee-hive shelters, byres and fences are wattled of dry palm-fronds.

Coming out of the great southern flats to this long sand-belt, which fences the northern sea, one has an illusion of upland, and, climbing over the sliding dunes, credits with difficulty that the land falls to the Nile level in every deeper hollow. Here palms, planted deep, are bearing abundantly, though the dunes in their constant eastward progression bury them to the spring of their plumes. Potatoes, too, and tomatoes are grown behind long alignments of sheltering wattles; nor even on the dunes is there lacking a wild, waxy pasture whose roots trail fifty or sixty feet to find a moist soil. A region not dissimilar may be seen from the Rosetta railway, and Edku, by its lake, is a village somewhat like. But there is no view west of the Nile to rival that from the higher dunes of Baltim; nothing like its forest of sand-choked palms stretched ribbonwise between the low lake-dunes and the golden sea-ward hillocks; nothing like the ample prospect of its lake, fringed with fisher hamlets, alive with splashing children, and bearing a distant burden of myriad amber sails.

CHAPTER IX

THE SATALIAN GULF

IN the early spring of 1904 the owner of the beautiful yacht, *Utowana*, invited me to a cruise in Levant waters. We coasted Crete, revisiting familiar spots, and then headed for Anatolia, where the long Carian fiords offer perfect shelter and much of present beauty and former fame, which you may not see easily except from a private ship. Didymi and Iassus, Bargylia and Budrum, Cnidus, Loryma, Rhodes and the Lycian cities, which I had visited seven years before, drew us to land day after day, and it was full April when we made Cape Chelidonia, and bore up into the Satalian Gulf.

The sky had cleared after some days of south-westerly weather, and morning broke in that rare splendour which persuaded Hebrew poets that perfect bliss will be perfect light. A long creaming swell heaved like opalescent satin, set with dusky pearls of islets; and the Norse deck-hands vented their joy of life in signalling ecstatically to the astonished crew of a caique, which was rocking on the fairy sea. The lust of movement grew in us also till we found the yacht too small. Where could we go ashore on that lovely land? One of us remembered the famous undying fire of Chimaera which few have seen in the Lycian forest, and begged that we put into Deliklitash and range

afield. The Owner was willing; the course was changed, and we slanted towards the shore.

For an hour we hugged the crags; then, as a broad bay opened below wooded steeps, wore round till the glittering pyramid of Takhtaly was on our starboard bow. A shelving bank of shingle appeared ahead, and behind it, a narrow ribbon of fields and garden ground, divided by a stream, which issued from a black cleft in the horse-shoe of cliffs. Half a dozen roofs peeped out of the trees, and presently, as a red ensign shook itself out to welcome the rare visit of what was thought a ship of war, we descried a little knot of eager figures gathering to the beach. Anchor was dropped far out (for soundings were none too frequent on our charts), and the whale-boat's men had to pull long and strong before our bow grated on the shingle, and was hauled high and dry by willing hands. The Stars and Stripes had probably never flown before off Deliklitash. Our latest predecessor seems to have been the Crown Prince of Italy, now King, who called some years ago, and left a pleasant memory, which went for something in our reception. At any rate all ashore seemed glad of our coming, and emulously offered guidance to *Yanár*, the Fire, assuming without further question that, like our royal forerunner, we were come to see Chimaera.

The path led northward at first, across the shallow stream, into gardens where we threaded our way among irrigation ditches, in defiance of protesting hounds, and through and under a various vegeta-

tion rioting for room. The little plain, which faces south-east below gigantic firebricks of red rock, must grill under summer noons in the climate of a hot-house ; for even on an April morning, after a spell of storm, it seemed a valley where snow could never come nor any wind blow coldly. Certainly none was blowing then, and our gait of emulous exhilaration sobered gradually as the sun rose higher, and the path sloped upwards over the short turf of a ravine where camels browsed. Once through the gardens, we were to see no human being except a herd-boy, feeding his kine near the sea, and little sign of the hand or foot of man. The forest straggled to meet us in clumps of holm-oak and plane on the floor of the ravine, but spread a thicker mantle of pine and fir up the steepening slopes, till checked by cornices of volcanic crag. It is not often that one may walk in Turkey so free of police or fear of land-lopers, among unfamiliar flowers and birds and butterflies. The guide talked of the chase as a Lycian farmer, sportsman in grain, will always talk, telling tales of bears which come down into the little plain to forage on winter nights ; of boars which rout in the garden grounds ; of myriad partridges and francolins, of which, however, we saw and shot but one ; of leopards, and also of lions, which he believed might yet be found in the wilder hills. No European has ever shot, or so much as seen, alive or dead, in Lycia the royal beast whose effigy is so often carved on Lycian tombs ; and maybe, this *arslân* of Deliklitash was no more

than the panther, which ranges other Anatolian mountains, less unknown than the Lycian Alps.

Arrived abreast of a ruddy patch on the northern side of the ravine, which he said was the dump-heap of an ancient copper mine, the guide bore away to the left, and led us up the steep slope among pines. There was no track but such as goats make, and the rock-steps made long striding for booted and gaitered men ; but our Lycian, who was shod with close-bound layers of hide and wool, light as a mocassin and pliable as a sock, the most suitable gear in the world for rocks, bounded up them like his goats. Some of us would not be beaten by him ; others frankly refused to keep his pace ; and in very open order we came up at last, breathless and crimson, into a little dell, about a thousand feet above the ravine, bare of trees, and floored with an ashen crust. A huddle of mean ruins lay in the desolate clearing, which looked like the tailing of a furnace, and smelt of leaking coal gas. ‘ *Ishtë !* ’ said the guide, ‘ There you are ! YANÁR ! ’

What disillusion ! Where then were the eternal fires of Chimaera ? The sun beat pitilessly on the little hollow, which seemed burned out, blanched, dead. Was this what we had come so far to see ? The last arrived of us, the least cool and most disgusted, made a bee-line for the ruins, checked abruptly, and jumped aside. We followed with more wariness, and, behold, the Fire was at our feet. Tongues of flame, spirituous, colourless, wellnigh invisible in that white glare, were licking the mouths of a

dozen vents—flames inextinguishable, inexhaustible, fed by nothing seen or felt. The guide said other fires would break out wherever water was poured, and drawing from a mountain rivulet hard by, we found it so. The largest vent opens almost beneath the main group of ruin, which has evidently once been a church, raised with the stones of some older building. A Greek inscription is encrusted in the blistered wall, and surely some pagan temple has stood here to the Spirit of the Fire. On the edge of the clearing, half hidden in thorn scrub, rise ruins of another building of many chambers, to whose crumbling walls mouldering frescoes of saints still cling. Here, doubtless, dwelt the monks who served the church. Trees and bushes on all hands were hung with rags, vicarious vouchers for former wearers. That was all. A second patch like this and similar ruins, said the guide, were to be found higher up the mountain; but we did not go to his place, and thus saw no more of Chimaera than that half-acre of pallid slag, with its lambent, elusive flames, scorched ruins, and beggarly memorials of modern pagans rotting on leafless boughs.

We turned to go down the hill well content; for if we had found no wonder—the spectacle is no great matter, except by night, when the burning patch is a far-seen beacon at sea—we had been on holy ground, where man has communed with the Earth Spirit since first he broke into the Lycian wilds. The piacular rags, the temple stones, bore sufficient witness that so he believed and still

believes. There is no record of the name by which he called the Spirit ; but in all likelihood, when Christianity had won him, he raised his church here to the Panaghía, the All Holy, the Virgin Mother, whose honour nine out of ten churches in Western Asia Minor commemorate. There are many Christian shrines, of course, in the Nearer East which bear other names than hers, dedicated to obscure saints who never lived ; and there are tombs enough, honoured as resting-places of other saints who never died, cenotaphs as vain as those barrows which are supposed by Islamic piety to cover in double and triple the giant bones of Patriarchs drowned in the Flood, or as the *turbés* of early Moslem champions, who, in fact, died decently in far Arabian oases, or were eaten of birds and dogs in passes of Syria. But most of such shrines and tombs are peculiar sanctuaries, holy places of particular tribal groups, whose ghostly tenants passed through many metempsychoses, before they found their final peace as Saint This or Abu That ; whereas the Panaghía enjoys universal honour in all this region, having inherited from the one great Nature Goddess, who was worshipped of old under so many names—Leto and Artemis, Kybele and Mylitta, Baalit and Ashtoreth, and others still earlier, which are not known to us.

Anchor was up by early afternoon, and we dropped down the coast northwards to Tekir Ova, once Phaselis, the most easterly city which

paid the Athenian tribute. Right over us hung a mountain whose eight thousand feet rise from the sea-line to the snow. Takhtaly is the proudest peak on the exquisite Anatolian coast, perhaps on any coast at all of the Mediterranean sea, and, seen from south, east, or north, will be remembered when many a loftier mountain has been forgotten. It is the great glory of Phaselis ; but even were it away, the site of the city would be one of the most beautiful in the Greek lands, whether for its prospect over the purple gulf to the Tauric Alps, or for its nearer setting. The main group of habitations lies on a peninsula of jutting rock, which falls sheer to the sea on three sides, and probably was once an island, though not in historic times ; for an ancient aqueduct straddles the sandy isthmus. The lie of the land gave the city two harbours, of which the southern is large, shallow, and silted up, while the northern is the most pellucid rock-bay imaginable, still fringed with broken quays and fenced by a broken mole. All eastern Lycia is now become wilderness, but Tekir Ova is a wilder spot than most. The site seems to have been little worth any one's while to quarry, and the Greek, Roman, and Byzantine ruins have been left for Nature to appropriate as best she may. On the high part of the peninsula sturdy cistus shrubs, finding room to root in every corner and cranny, have helped wind and weather to break down the buildings bit by bit into such vast hummocks as a terrific earthquake might leave ; and the thorns, which fence

each great heap, sprouting thickest in the hollows, let no man through without taking toll of his garments and skin. The main street, flanked by the theatre and other public buildings, which ran across the isthmus from one harbour to the other, is now become a long grove of evergreen and deciduous trees, which have thrust down many a wall, and trail their fingers over carved and inscribed stones; and this fortuitous avenue frames some very pretty effects, the best being a glimpse of the northern harbour, seen in vignette down the green tunnel. But none of human kind passes to and fro in this street any more. Fauns and hamadryads are all that you would see in the longest vigil.

There is no monument worth a pilgrimage. The theatre is small and collapsed; the temples are buried beneath their own ruin, and become shaggy hillocks; the buildings about the market-place are choked, and hardly more visible in the brake than the Castle in the Sleeping Wood. A file of white marble gravestones, which lines the northward road, alone makes a show. But it is worth going all the way to Phaselis only to see what gracious revenge Nature can take on those who were once her lords.

Tekir Ova is a type of what one may see so often along these coasts of Asia Minor—at every few miles an ancient seaport, its moles abandoned to the waves and its streets to the fox and the jackal. The busy modern centres of life in Asia Minor lie out of sight of the sea, the few exceptions being

towns whose spring of life resides in an alien people, and not in the masters of the land. The Turk is in fault, of course, both because he always withdraws his land, like his house, from the sight of alien men, and also because, in his distaste of the sea, he formerly allowed corsairs to scare the villages into the hills. But if that fault has been his, a like fault was committed also by others long before him. Not only are modern settlements lacking on the Anatolian shores, but, it seems, very ancient ones as well. The coastal sites have yet to show evidence of *primaeval* times, and all the native Anatolian cities of the remoter age, thus far known, except Hissarlik, lie inland, and the traces of the earliest civilization have been found out of sight of the sea. Ephesus has yielded no prehistoric things, nor have any Ionian or Carian sites, which have been explored, yielded more. So the Turk has but done what all eastern rulers of Asia Minor, from the Hittite to the Persian, did before him.

At Phaselis we saw the last of Lycia, except her higher snows, which open out, peak behind peak, in the backward view from the northern shore of the Gulf; and we passed on to Pamphylia, the land of All Tribes in antiquity and still a home for the scrapings and leavings of peoples. Whenever the Ottoman Government wants room for refugees, it plants them in Pamphylia. Thither have come Moslems from Greece during the war of independence, and Moslems from Crete since the Liberation;

Circassians and Bulgars, at any time during the past generation ; and gypsies at all times since the Ottoman conquest. All alike live as though halted for no more than the day, and waiting the word to go farther and fare better—or worse. There are very few villages, and those that exist seem not of the country. Even as progress is reckoned in Asiatic Turkey, Pamphylia is an unprogressive land, where no one thinks it worth his while to do more than mark time. Why residence there should be so little desired, I know not. Perhaps it is undesirable. The coastal plains, with their southward aspect, and great mountain screen to the north, must be intensely hot in the summer months ; and since they are largely alluvial and in many parts marshy, mosquitoes and fever are probably all too rife. But just because it is so desolate now, Pamphylia keeps the most wonderful memorials of her past. Termessus and Perga, Aspendus and Sidé were not very great or famous cities in their day, and were it not for Paul the Apostle, would hardly have been known by name to the modern world. But their remote ruins have survived as have hardly any others of their epoch, and all are famous cities now.

About the third hour of the day we were off the mouth of the Eurymedon river, cruising above Persian wrecks, sunk by Cimon the Athenian. Balkis Kalé—for Aspendus has so appealed to oriental imagination as to be renamed, with other magic ‘ castles ’, after Solomon’s Arabian Queen—

lies some miles up stream, and the Owner proposed, if his petrol launch could pass the bar, to take us to the site by water. The deep discolour of the sea a mile offshore warned us that the river was running high, and a Greek fisherman, brought from Adalia to be pilot, prophesied that we should pass easily into the mouth, but soon meet too fierce a current. He was to prove right ; but at first we discredited him, finding not only water enough and to spare on the bar, but the launch making easy way up a placid flood, which glided almost bank high between earthy flats, not unlike the lower Delta lands of Egypt in vegetation and colour. There seemed few men or beasts on either hand, and such as there were stared astonished beyond measure at sight of a bark breasting the stream without oar or sail or smoke. But soon a large village of Cretan refugees rose into view on a mound some distance from the right bank, and as the channel curved eastward, two caiques at anchor appeared ahead. Pointing to them our pilot said that we should float so far but no farther, and before we were well abreast of them he was justified. The current, which had been running thus far three miles an hour against the launch, quickened to five and six, and our keel began to touch ground from one moment to another. There was nothing for it but to make fast, walk to the nearest hamlet, and seek horses.

These proved hard to find. There were few houses, and those widely spaced among fields and gardens. Most had but a single upper chamber

built over a cow-byre (as men build in marshy plains), and half were empty and locked. The rest sheltered rather taciturn peasants, who seemed to live lonely lives, each man for himself. None bade us welcome, and none, till forced by the men of our escort, would fetch his beast from pasture and take a double hire. It was near noon, therefore, before we were mounted and away, and even by hustling unwilling horses, we could hope for no more than a very short stay at Balkís. The path ran among untilled hillocks, and now and again opened a view of some foaming reach of the river. So long as we kept the left bank, there was little to look at except the same Tauric snows which had been closing our northward view for a week past. At one point we passed out of the scrub into a grassy clearing dappled with the shadows of old cedars, where half a dozen brood mares pastured, each with her foal, under the sole guard of four huge dogs; but even there no man appeared, nor were we to see one till we struck the river again at its single bridge, a decayed and dangerous relic of a better age, built bowwise to meet the stream. Here on the right bank stood a caravanserai, whence a knot of gypsies ran out to stare as we crossed. Their winter camp lay beside our farther road—a huddle of black tents and bamboo huts, of yapping puppy-dogs, squalling babies, elfin women and sooty kettles, among which we drew rein to gaze a moment on the distant bulk of the Theatre of Aspendus.

You may have seen amphitheatres in Italy,

France, Dalmatia and Africa; temples in Egypt and Greece; palaces in Crete. You may be sated with antiquity, or scornful of it, but you have not seen the Theatre of Aspendus. It has at once the grandeur of scale which excites fancy, and that perfection in survival which, lulling the sense of strangeness, allows fancy to leap unastonished across the centuries. In every other Roman theatre, which I have visited, some part of the *cavea* is perished, the uppermost tiers at any rate being merged so irregularly into the hillside that one hardly knows where seats end and naked rock begins; or else jungle intrudes on the auditorium, and the *scena* wall, even if so perfect as at Orange, stands a dreary skeleton, with not only its marble statues lost, but all marble mouldings and casing whatsoever. Thus, whether one looks up or down, all illusion that the building might still serve its first purpose is cheated. But at Aspendus, not only is every bench in its place and perfect, but the *cavea* is crowned still with the original arcade which served as a finish and coping to the whole. Vegetation has hardly been able to take root in the close joints of the masonry, and the ancient drains and gutters, which are still serviceable, have not suffered much silt to settle in the orchestra. From the stage buildings little is missing, and from the *scena* wall nothing, except the contents of the niches. All stones are still square and sharp, and the courses are true as if laid yesterday. The whole building, moreover, is of gigantic size, erected not at divers

epochs by the city, but all at once by the pious munificence of one wealthy individual, desirous to outdo all other citizens of the Empire in gratitude for the victorious return of Lucius Verus from the East. Under the inscription by which his act is recorded for all time to come, one enters the main portal to right of the stage. A taciturn officer of the Adalia police, who had ridden up with us, stood stock still a moment under this great doorway, and then went off by himself, looking curiously at every part of the corridors, stage and seats. At last he came back, accepted a cigarette, and stared slowly round the great horseshoe. 'What sort of men,' he asked, 'were here before us? No Osmanli built this.'

Taken all in all, the Theatre of Aspendus is perhaps the most splendid of the great Roman buildings that time has spared. Certainly it is the first and greatest of the surviving theatres, and the one which fancy may most easily repeople with its ancient audience and dead players. You can imagine yourself strayed into it on an off-day, and look for the slaves to come and set it in order for a performance on the morrow; and, as in the Temple of Edfu, one treads softly, as a stranger doubtful of his right of entry.

It is hard to leave this Theatre; but when you do, follow the line of the city wall up to the table-land behind, where was the market-place, not to see only its ruined porticoes nor yet the shell of a great Basilica, which rises out of the brushwood, nor yet again the two marble statues lying near it, which

perhaps were passed over by Verres when he robbed Aspendus to enrich his gallery ; but to see also the northward view. The site lies on the rocky roots of Taurus, just where the Eurymedon escapes from a gorge whose fringing scarps lead the eye step by step into the farthest blue of the hills. The mountain screen, which shuts off the central Anatolian lakes, is more boldly carved into peak and buttress behind Aspendus than I have seen it elsewhere, and is more nobly wooded to the verge of the spring snows. Few palaces have so fair a prospect as the Castle of Queen Balkís.

The next morning found the *Utowna* a few miles further east, at Old Adalia, settled, within the last year or two, by some two hundred Cretan families, who have made themselves dwellings within the shell of Sidé. Here is the wreck of a theatre only less enormous than that at Aspendus. Since there was no convenient hillside to be hollowed, the auditorium has been raised on arches like a half Coliseum, and it survives almost whole ; but the *scena* wall has collapsed upon the stage in a mighty cataract of stones. One part of the ancient city is still a labyrinth of ruin ; the other has been cleared and built upon by the Cretans. The exiles seemed ill at ease in their refuge. The Sultan had given them land and houses ; but their fields, they said, were stony, and they lacked cattle for the plough ; the water was bad, and they found they could talk little with their Greek tongues to the surrounding

folk. It was hard, they thought, to have to begin life afresh, and for what fault? None the less, they seemed to be setting brave faces towards the future; and making the best of their fortune; and though they knew well enough that men of English speech had weighted the scale against their creed in Crete, they showed no rancour towards us, but were glad to trade in ancient coins and scarcely younger eggs. They bethought them, too, of antiques in marble and terra-cotta, which they had found while collecting stones from Sidé, or turning its soil with their spades; and in the event, we spent some exhilarating hours in unashamed quest of forbidden things. It were easy enough now to justify our looting, for, else, those marbles had gone long ago into the limekiln. But I doubt if any one of us thought a moment about justification, as we were loading the whale-boat once and again with spoils of Sidé. We were filled full of the lust of loot, possessing ourselves of treasure ready-made, reaping that we had not sown, tasting a joy which reckes as little of justification as any on earth. It is the joy which has made pirates and filibusters and mercenary adventurers of all sorts and conditions of men, and kept them so till death. It recruited Greeks to fight for Persia, and Germans to fight for Rome, Norsemen to fight for Constantinople, and any one and every one to fight in Grand Companies, and Knightly Orders, and Janissary and Mameluke battalions; and it will recruit their like to the end of time.

CHAPTER X

CYRENE

AFTER coasting Cilicia and Cyprus for an idle week, the *Utowana* headed out to sea once more. We were bound for Cyrene, or so near at least as we might go to that long forbidden city. Had not the party been all of American nationality except one, we should perhaps never have put our luck to the test at all. But since the Youngest Race sees no reason why it should not go anywhere on earth, the *Utowana* made the African shore late on a misty afternoon, and anchored off Ras el-Tin.

Under a red bar of sunset, Cyrenaica looked a grim land. Shelving up in low desert planes, treeless, houseless, tentless, it put us in mind more of present danger from Bedawi landlopers and Senussi fanatics than of the past glory of Cyrene. The latest news of the inner country, which had been current in Europe, reported it closed to Christians by a Government conscious that it could not guarantee them against the Senussi Order, which it was unwilling to offend. This mysterious Brotherhood was a bugbear of which we, like most people, knew very little. Widely spread and greatly respected through all north Africa, powerful at Mecca, and at one time, at any rate, not less powerful in Stambul, it had long been credited with a fanatic hatred of Christians, and indeed of all

Moslems who make terms with Christendom, even the Caliph himself. Two generations ago it fixed its chief seat on Jebel Akhdar in Cyrenaica, attracted by the loneliness of the well-watered highlands ; and although, since 1876, its leaders had been withdrawing by stages into the heart of Africa, we knew that two score Senussi convents flourished still about Cyrene, and drew the local Bedawis to them. In the early eighties, when Abdul Hamid was hoping to push his Islamic policy by means of this Brotherhood, the real power in Tripolitan Turkey was given into its hands ; and Duveyrier, who set himself to study its aims and work in the oases behind French Africa, charged it with constant endeavour to stay by robbery and murder all Frank advance. Others took up his cry, and pointed in proof to the killing of the Marquis de Morés by men of Ghadâmes, as he was feeling his way towards Kufra. Our latest forerunner in Cyrene had found the Bedawis still as hostile to his presence as Murdoch Smith and James Hamilton had found them to theirs ; and nothing, to our knowledge, had happened since to make the outlook more hopeful.

In fact, however, a certain change of good omen had taken place, as we were to learn next day in Derna. Well received in that pleasant half-Moorish town, whose coral beach and deep palm groves make it an outpost of tropic Africa, while its clean alleys, fair gardens, and grave, well-seeming Arabs, suggest an oasis town of Nejd, we heard that

Cretan colonists were newly come to Cyrenaica. A hundred refugee families, it was said, had settled at Marsa Susa, and sixty about Ain Shahát, as Arabs name the Apollo fountain at Cyrene; and beside each colony a handful of Ottoman troops was encamped. True, Christians were still forbidden to travel in the inner country; but with credentials from Derna, said the Italian who flies our flag there on high days and holidays, we might drop anchor at Marsa Susa, and ask an escort to Ain Shahat. He himself had been there lately with a friend, and had found the mudir a most liberal Turk, who would rejoice to see us. So there was a mudir? Yes, a civilian officer who was gripping the Bedawis tighter every day. And the Senussis, what of them? He replied that, with a mudir on the spot and an escort to show that the Government was for us, there would be no trouble. Indeed, in these days, he added, the convents show no ill-will to Europeans. He took us presently to call on the Governor, a fat little Candiote of an inordinate garrulity and a tremulous anxiety to please, who gave us the needful letter on the spot and then, after his kind, repented him bitterly, and asked for it again. But we held firm and, as we rowed out again to the yacht, on a night too warm for the season, over waters which doubled every star and the full globe of the moon, our minds were easy. There was no telegraph in Cyrenaica, and the yacht could drop down to Marsa Susa many hours ahead of any mounted messenger from Derna.

Within five hours she was anchored off the old city of Apollonia, which is become an heap; and in two more half her passengers, with an escort of seven soldiers and our Derniote friend's *kavass* for guide, were mounted on two spavined white mares, two donkeys, and a camel. The yacht was left to rock on the treacherous roadstead outside the reefs, and the Owner, turning his back on his ship, put up a prayer that the land-wind, which had followed the fair but fickle southerly breeze of the day before, might hold till the morrow. We had yet to learn that in Cyrenaica the *Khamsin* of Egypt is apt to pass into the dread *Gharbís*, a gale veering between south-west and north, from whose wrath there is no safe shelter at Marsa Susa, or indeed anywhere else on the coast for some hundreds of miles. So we kicked up our beasts and jogged merrily inland past plots of red tillage, and feeding flocks, and Cretan shepherds leaning on old Belgian rifles, towards the foot of the scarp up which a rock road of the ancients leads to Cyrene.

Forgotten highways always seem to me haunted places; and, since even second sight can be sharpened by realities, the better preserved a highway is, the better you see its ghosts. There could be no experience more eerie than to ride alone and by night from Apollonia to Cyrene through tangled forests and across deserted glades, treading pavements which dead men have worn. This strange way in the wilderness is not heaped up like a Roman road, but chiselled squarely out of living rock. Its

raised side-walks still align it on either hand, and the tracks of Greek chariots and Libyan carts are cut deep in its face. For twenty centuries it has borne its witness to the grandeur that was once Cyrene, and it will bear it still for centuries to come.

Except for the stirring sight of it, we found our ride to Cyrene an irksome exercise. The sky was clouded with scirocco, the air hung heavy, and there was no water by the way for our flagging beasts or the marching escort of Syrian soldiers. But here a ruined fort guarding a pass, there a group of sarcophagi, and everywhere the curves and cuttings of the road fed imagination, and shortened the hours, till, at an elbow of the climbing track, we came suddenly in sight of the tombs of Cyrene. There was yet a mile to go through the suburb of the dead, and with every step our wonder grew. Fresh from the carved cliffs of Lycia, we were not prepared for a finer spectacle in Africa. The pillared rock-graves of Cyrene rise in Doric, Ionic, and hybrid styles, terraced from top to bottom of the mountain buttresses. The more splendid fronts amaze one less than the endless tiers of commoner graves, mere rock-pits with gabled lids, which are cut out by thousands, with hardly a foot's breadth between them, on the hill sides. When later on we entered a larger tomb here and there, we often found behind one narrow façade a catacomb parcelled out in niches for half a hundred dead, whose beds have been used again and again. In modern days we set our cemeteries apart within walls and

in remote spots, fearing the corpse as we might a vampire, and rarely make the houses of the dead an embellishment of cities. But the Greek, and the Roman after him, held serried graves to be the noblest of civic avenues; and death must have lost half its sting for those who knew they would lie beside the main road in tombs seen of all wayfaring men and praised in distant lands.

Among these myriad mansions of the dead we heard the first sounds of men. Voices cried to us from tombs opening high on a hill-side below a thin crown of pines; but two or three troglodytes, who came out to view, went back at sight of our soldiers. Unmet and unsaluted, we followed the splendid curves and counter-curves of the road, till it ran out on a level stretch, where near a single hut of rough stones, under the bloody flag of Turkey, we came on the booted mudir himself in council with four spearmen of the Haasa. He looked up in some astonishment and trouble, for few and far between are European visitors to Cyrene. But the breeding of a Turk, the custom of Islam, and the sight of our *Iradé* secured us hospitality in his bullet-proof room, built above a Roman sepulchre.

We were not minded, however, to sit long over a mudir's coffee, and soon went forth again to see something of the city before dark fell. The scirocco had not yet veiled, though it dimmed, the distance, and we could understand, if not echo, the rapture of luckier travellers, who in clear weather have looked across the cemeteries to the cornlands of the

lower plateau. The sea swelled grey to the horizon, confounded with the dun northward sky; and in the nearer view stretched the broad belt of ruddy soil, now not half ploughed, which was once the pride of Cyrene. A green ribbon, spreading fan-wise as it sloped, marked the course of the Apollo waters, captured and distributed by the Senussis; and a sinuous line of scarps and tree-tops, winding westward, was, we were told, the vaunted Wady bil-Ghadir, the Happy Valley, where were other tombs as splendid as any that we had seen. The greater monuments, such as the Theatre and the Apollo Temple itself, of which last little is visible except the platform on which the main building once stood, lie along the higher course of the Apollo stream. Southward, also, the view from the crest of the plateau is amazing, not for ruins of the city, of which few stand up out of the corn, but for the immensity of the site. Cyrene was built at the summit of a slope which falls steeply to the sea but gently inland, melting southward into steppe at the limit of vision, and for miles and miles dotted with fragments of grey ruin. The Bedawis say that it is six camel-hours from one end to another of 'Grené', as the name 'Kyrene' has been softened in their mouths. No site of antiquity so well suggests how a large city of our own day will seem when at last deserted by man.

All that we saw then in fast fading light we expected to see better on the morrow, and it was not worth while to do more than climb the height

above the Apollo Fountain, which was surely the acropolis of the city. A Cretan came out of a tomb, and showed us this and that bit of moulding or sculpture, betraying a Greek's brain below his turban; but such Bedawis as we crossed in the way saluted the mudir only. The latter, obviously careful on the return to guide us into a bypath out of sight of the Senussi convent, walked quickly and nervously; but, once returned to his windowless room, became at ease, showing the keepsakes and trinkets with which in this wild place he kept Stambuline life in mind. He was a young Cypriote, mild-eyed, and, naturally, I should judge, of good parts and disposition, but full of wistful envy of Frankish culture, of which he had had a taste in boyhood at Nicosía, and in later youth in the French *lycée* at Galata. This kind of Turk makes rather a melancholy figure. Latin Europe does little for him beyond bringing *cafés chantants* and lewd photographs within his ken. Robbing him of his implicit reliance on the law and custom of Islam, it throws him upon his own individuality, unsupported by the social code to which he was born. How, then, shall he keep his hands clean in some solitary seat of petty power? He may endure for a while; but, lacking pride of self and all faith, why should he refrain from picking and stealing and grinding the face of the poor? Hoping and approving the best way, he is bound sooner or later to follow the worst; and probably from his type develop the most evil of governors, those who are

cruel for no other reason than that they feel unhelped and alone.

He was kind, however, to us, putting all and sundry of his possessions at our service, even his single bedstead. But as the three of us would have filled a Great Bed of Ware, we settled precedence by stretching ourselves cheek by jowl on the floor, and so passed an unquiet night in the close air of the barred room. I slipped the bolts in the small hours of morning, and looked out over Cyrene. A pallid moon was sailing high within an iridescent ring, and mirk and scud were blowing up fast and faster from the west. We might count ourselves lucky if there were still some southing in the gale by the time we should reach the ship; but come what might, we must give a morning to Cyrene.

We began with the eastern cemetery, and were guided to the few painted tombs which earlier explorers have left unspoiled. The outer hall of the best shows a curious frieze of agonistic pictures in a very dim light. The funeral feasts and games, the foot races, chariot races, wrestling, and so forth, are rudely done in a late and coarse style; but they have this of interest—that many, indeed most, of the figures are painted of black complexion, while clad in gay Athenian garments. There you have hybrid Cyrene, the colony which earliest made a practice of mixing Hellenic and barbarian blood, and had a history more Libyan than Greek. For the rest, we could do little more than visit a few larger tombs, and photograph the more curious

pillared façades, which stand above the barley on the terraces; and though there was little light in the olive sky, we were able to get some pictures of the carved hillsides.

During three succeeding hours spent in rambling over the plateau above—hours which the poor mudir found slow-footed indeed—we learned how little of the great city is left above ground, and how much the excavators of 1861 left to be done. Murdoch Smith and Porcher, with the five blacks employed in their first season, and the thirty whom they considered a full gang in their second, did no more than scratch the skin of Cyrene. All that is most precious there, the spoil of the true Hellenic age, is still to seek. But the digger of the future, while enjoying greater security, will not have the free hand of the pioneers, for the Cretans are ploughing what the Senussi Arabs left fallow, and almost the whole site, when we saw it, stood thick with corn. So masked is it, at least in the spring-time, that the outline of the Stadium, the low ridge of the southern city wall, a few heaped up columns and other architectonic members of Byzantine churches, with vast vaulted reservoirs of late Roman date are about all the ruins of whose character one can be sure in the eastern half of the city. Beyond the hollow, up which ran the main road from the Great Theatre and the Temple of Apollo, the western half of the site contains an Odeum or smaller Theatre and the fine wreck of a Hellenic tower, placed on the brink of the deep Wady Buhayat, at the point

where the inward wall of the acropolis dips to join the outer wall of the city. The Roman castle stood at the north-western angle of Cyrene, which is the only point within the walls where the ground swells from the general level of the plateau into something like a hill. West, north, and east this angle breaks away in low cliffs, from whose foot the three main fountains of Cyrene spring, among them that of Apollo high up on the north-eastward face. With running streams on three sides, this commanding knoll seems alone to answer to that 'place among waters' promised to the first colonists by the oracle; and if ever it be my fortune to search for the earliest Cyrene, I shall dig on that knoll, and not in the eastern city, where slopes are easy, and the spoil-heaps of former diggers alone break the level.

Here, however, as elsewhere, we scanned in vain the few bare spaces for potsherds of early style. Thick layers of late ruin and silt lie over them, and three-foot corn-stalks stand above all. Only one noteworthy marble appeared on the surface, a pedestal with four reliefs, described by James Hamilton and other travellers. It is of fair workmanship, and inscribed with a greatly perished dedication not earlier than the age of the later Ptolemies. In the hollow between the two halves of the city, and over a wide area outside the walls, both south and north, innumerable dressed blocks stand upright, one behind another. With a field-glass one may see these puzzling files radiating from the city

far out over the lower plain, and ranged seemingly at random, as a baby might set toy bricks on end. I guessed at first that they might be unwritten headstones of poor graves; but, seeing they occurred within the walls, and mostly in the lower lying places—for instance, about the upper part of the central hollow, below the vaulted reservoirs—I came to suspect they had once carried wooden pipes, which distributed the Apollo waters over the lower plain and the contents of the reservoirs to a part of the upper city; and I still can find no better reading of their riddle.

Our walk brought us at last to the Apollo fountain, the cause and centre of Cyrenian life. The cliff, from whose foot its stream issues, has been cut back and scarped. A gable-mark some twenty feet up its face bears witness that a portico once shadowed the basin, and a rock-inscription on the short returning face records its restoration in the early Imperial age. The stream can be followed upwards for some distance into the rock, if one cares to crawl among stalagmites; but the tunnel has narrowed since former days. The Bedawis say the water is each year less. As we drank of it and bathed our tired feet, we found it cool, not cold, and even on an April morning, in scirocco weather, only a few degrees below the air. Two or three Bedawis, who were washing their cotton garments, withdrew at our approach, and no women were visible. Other Bedawis, armed with long guns or spears and driving laden beasts, were passing to and

fro on the path of the Senussi convent, the focus of modern Cyrene, which has created a broad belt of garden ground, frayed out over the lower plain.

Whatever may be dark regarding this Brotherhood, one thing at least is clear—that it has made the waste places of Cyrenaica bloom again, and fostered trade and settled life among the Bedawis. The Senussis ‘ spare no effort ’, said James Hamilton in 1851, ‘ to turn the property they have acquired (partly by purchase, but more largely by donation) to good account ’. Their convents are as much hostels as retreats—mansions where the Moslem wayfarer finds safety for his person and wares during at least three days. If the Arabs whom we met in Cyrene were dour and silent, so are almost all nomads at first sight of a stranger. They offered no sign of active hostility to us, who, for our part, were careful to keep outside the fence of the convent. We could see that the mudir hoped we would not transgress it; but in his frankest moments he spoke of Senussis not only without fear, but without any apparent sense that they mattered greatly. They were pious men, he said, the best of the local *Muslimin*, learned and peaceful. This particular convent of Ain Shahat got an evil name from the writings of Hamilton and Murdoch Smith, both of whom found the notorious long-living fanatic, Sidi Mustafa, in command; but when an Italian commercial mission reached Cyrene in 1884, it was received courteously by his successor.

On the whole, when one weighs what European

travellers on the one hand, and educated Arabs on the other, have said about the Senussi Order, and also the known facts of its history since the founder, Sidi Muhammad, settled in Cyrenaica, one cannot but think that it has been taken too seriously in the West. The Order is not a sect, much less does it profess a religion of its own ; for its members are of the Malekite school of Sunni believers. Only one confraternity among many in the world of Islam, it is sworn to practise a certain rigour of life—as an Arab understands rigour—in conformity with the letter of the earliest Law ; and, like most confraternities, it has assumed and paraded a certain secrecy. The founder had this distinguishing idea, that the perfect life can best be led in temporal independence ; and, therefore, he chose deserted Cyrenaica for the first home of his Order. As the Osmanli's grip tightened on the coast, and his braided officers became ubiquitous, Muhammad's successor, pursuing the same idea, withdrew from the district, first to the oasis of Jaghbub in the southern waste, and then to Kufra. There he and his Order have led a free and quiet life in the practice of pious exercises and the enjoyment of all pleasures which are not banned by the gospel of Gabriel—a life not too ascetic. Wine, tobacco, and coffee Senussis may not taste ; but tea—what Word has forbidden it ? That blessed drink, sings a poet of the sheikhly Senussi family, makes food sweet in the belly, and prolongs amorous passion ; and what good things, he asks, need a man ensue more

than these ? It is credible that the Order, whether bidden from headquarters or inspired by local zeal, has kicked against the pricks now and then, and in doing what it could to stay the inroad of Christians, has set its face especially against Frenchmen in the Tunisian *hinterland*, and against Britons in the Libyan oases and the western Sudan. But the painful withdrawals of the Senussi chiefs from the fair uplands of the coast farther and yet farther into torrid Africa have apparently been inspired only by a desire for a quiet Arabian life where Turks and Franks are not ; and who shall blame them for that desire ?

The local saints held themselves aloof, but a group of some forty armed Bedawis gathered to see us go. Squatting, eagle-beaked and narrow-eyed, like so many vultures on a rocky ledge, they set us thinking whether they would have found a use for their long guns and spears in some gully of the downward road, had we given them a little longer time for thought. The Beni Haasa must be very pure Arab. I have noticed no finer type, even among Bedawis who have come from Nejd itself within short historic memory. A few of their gipsy-like wives, seen not then but next day in the plain of Apollonia, showed the same high breeding in their unveiled faces.

The mudir added himself and his orderly to our cavalcade, and led us back briskly down the rock road towards the sea, the Syrian soldiers swinging alongside without any sign of tiring. Near the

brink of the lower shelf we got glimpses right and left into great gorges hewn in it, which have been for any number of ages haunts of cave-dwelling men ; but their grandeur seemed to us somewhat below the enthusiasm of earlier travellers. Perhaps the thick, sunless air of that afternoon robbed them of their due effect. Perhaps we had come too lately from the splendid Lycian valleys and peaks to find the Cyrenaica all that those have found it whose eyes had first been blistered and blinded by the sun and sands of the Syrtis.

Our only fear was for the yacht. As we left the shelter of the forest and drew rein on the edge of the last steep, we knew how fierce a gale drove across the path. White wrinkles of surf alone betrayed the sea, for the mirk of the scirocco lay on the plain ; and half an hour later, when we came to the Cretan huts, we could see no farther than the reefs, and had to be assured by the soldiers on the beach that the yacht was really gone. She had put out to sea the night before, they said, and appeared again with the sun ; but since noon she had sheered off, and Allah knew where she might be now. If He willed, she had found peace behind Ras Hilal.

It was Wednesday at four of the afternoon, and not till Saturday, a little after midday, did we see her again. But for a doubt of her safety, which weighed most heavily on the Owner, and the certainty, to which we were all alive, that, should the gale haul to north or east of north, she would have to run from the Cyrenaic shore altogether,

leaving us marooned for many days, we found ourselves in no very evil plight. True, we had slender baggage chosen for the needs of one night, not five ; but soon one forgets to change raiment even for sleep, and finds happiness far from a bath. The captain of the little post made over to us his guest-room, a roofed recess in a quarry, and thither his woman folk sent cushions and quilts, and trays of meat and rice and sticky pastry seasoned with curdled milk and garnished with herbs from the garden, which our host and the mudir helped us to clear with finger and thumb. There was good water, for the source a few miles inland, which used to keep Apollonia alive, has been led into an aqueduct again by the Cretans ; and we found tobacco, which would at least burn, and *rahat*, peace, all the day long. What more, said the genial old soldier, do your hearts desire ?

More, however, they did desire. We were Western men, with an itch to be doing, and we tried to fulfil our souls a little among the fallen churches and rock-tombs of Apollonia. But, with all our leisure, we made no great discovery there ; and I doubt if the best thing that we found were not wild watercress growing thickly in the conduit. This we taught the Cretans and the soldiers to relish. What is left of Apollonia is only a long landward slice of the city, which in Christian times outstripped dying Cyrene. All the seaward face of it, with the harbour-wall and gate and port, has been eaten by the waves. The coast has sunk here since Roman times, and

probably is sinking still. The shallow bay, all rocks and shoals, in which we had made a difficult landing, is not any part of the old harbour of Apollonia, but was dry land when that harbour was sought by shipping. Reefs and islets, out at sea, over which the surf now broke wildly, remain perhaps from an old foreshore. Further westward we found tombs into whose doors the waves flowed; and, had it been fairer weather, we might have espied others altogether submerged, for the calm sea on this coast is of such a wonderful clearness that when on the first evening our leadsman dipped for an anchorage off Ras el-Tin, he could see a bottom of rock and sand, which his plummet could not reach.

The ruins of two fine Apollonian churches are marked by magnificent monoliths of *cipollino*, which it would pay some marble merchant to ship away; but the lack of moulded fragments and inscriptions shows that almost everything on the surface, except bits of black glazed pottery and stamped Samian ware, is of a very base age. Without powerful tackle one could not hope to get below that mass of fallen blocks, honeycombed by the blown sea salts. The landward wall, however, is in great part of the Greek time, remaining probably from the first foundation of the city, and seen from the hollow plain, it stands up finely. Somewhat, but not much, later are the remains of an Ionic temple and of a theatre, which faces seawards without the wall. Here the work of the waves may be well admired,

for the stage buildings are awash and surf runs up into the horseshoe of the seats.

The daily life of the little garrison was good to watch. The old commander had turned farmer, and, with the water-conduit under his control and thirty of the sturdiest knaves in the Levant at his orders, he was making more out of the red plain than any of the Crétans whom he had come to guard. The privates hoed his garden ; a corporal drove up his ewes at nightfall ; and under the moon the old man himself tucked his braided cuffs, tied half a dozen milky mothers head to tail, and tugged at their teats. The soldiers, peasant conscripts born to such a life, seemed only too happy to go back to it, and the field-work filling their time and thoughts kept them in the rude health of shepherds.

Most of our time was spent in watching sea and sky and uttering hopeful prophecies, which were slow of fulfilment. The scirocco died out of the weather by the first midnight, and a hard north-wester brought a livelier air, with rain and thunder and an ever-rising sea. By the third morning a surf was running both within and without the reefs, in which only a well-manned lifeboat could have lived ; and unwillingly resigning hope that the yacht would return to take us off, we did at last what should have been done at least a day earlier—we found a trusty Bedawi, and sent him eastward down the coast to Ras Hilal. He came back at evening with a scrawl from the skipper, and the

Owner ate a heartier meal than he had made yet in Marsa Susa.

With the fourth dawn the wind was falling, but the sea ran very high. The old Turk spoke of *rahat* for yet another day, but we would have no more of it; and, yielding to our entreaty, he called out an escort, and led us eastward to find the ship. There proved to be a fair path, used by the Cretans when they go to Derna. One of the refugees went ahead of us on a huge bull-camel, which could pick his way among rocks, and stride up the sides of gorges like a camel of Anatolia. When the track entered a wood, the rider would swing himself off by the first overhanging bough, and get back to the saddle again from the last, while his great beast never paused, feeling the burden of him hardly so much as to know if he were off or on. Much of the path led over red soil and under wild charubs and conifers; but thrice it was cut by sheer gullies, whose glassy limestone sides were bossed as if glaciers had passed. Two Bedawi tents were all the habitations we saw, and neither man nor woman was met; but once the path turned sharply to avoid a cluster of many graves, of which one was fresh mould. The tenting folk seem to bury in certain spots, and not at hazard, as one might expect; and, indeed, they carry their dead many days' journey to particular wayside cemeteries. Would they spare the Awakening Angel on the Last Day the labour of collecting stragglers, or do dead Bedawis love council and coffee-fellowship as much as the living?

On the cliffs of Ras Hilal we bade good-bye to the clean-living fellows who had escorted us and quietly refused our rewards. Gladly would the Owner have done them the honours of his ship, but this their old captain would not allow. In the latter's debt, too, we remained ; for after he had been got aboard the swinging, pitching yacht at risk of a broken leg or a cracked skull, he begged to be let go again at once, and was put with difficulty back on shore. The westerly current which sweeps this iron-bound coast was holding the ship broadside to the seas, and with wind and wave coming hour by hour more directly from the north, the open bay of Marsa Hilal was no place to ride in longer. Steam was got up, a course was set for Sicily, and by sunset the mountain of Cyrene lay on the horizon like a low cloud.

CHAPTER XI

DIGGING

THE search for ancient things below ground appeals strongly to many minds, but especially to those of women, which are moved most readily by curiosity and the passion of hazard. But few whose interest it excites seem to understand how rare are the high lights of success and how many the low lights of failure in a faithful picture of a digger's life. When I have been presented by a vague hostess as a 'digger in the Levant', and we are between fish and flesh, my neighbour, glancing at my hands, will often ask if my calling is a painful one in those climes. I reply that I dig *per alios*, and (with some shame) that, myself, I could not ply pick or spade anywhere for half a day. Incontinently she protests she desires nothing better than to lead such a life. Whereupon, as best I may, I change the subject, not in fear that she might be as good as her word, but in despair of giving her or any other inexperienced person in that company, amid dinner table talk, an understanding of the real nature of the digger's trade.

It is of such infinite variety, according to where, when, and why it happens to be followed, that generalities, even hedged about by all the caution of a leisured writer, are vanity; and the best I can do for you, my dinner partner, and for others who

have felicitated me on the fascinating holidays which I spend in the Near East, is to describe briefly and, if I can, faithfully, the course of my two latest excavations. They were both typical of the digger's life, the first carried out among the foundations of a great Hellenic shrine, the second in a cemetery of Egypt; and both were fortunate and fruitful beyond common measure. The one began in the summer during whose early days I had been at Cyrene, while the other fell eighteen months later; and to each I was commissioned by the British Museum.

Wood, the discoverer of the site of the great Artemisium at Ephesus, achieved the all but impossible in lighting on its pavement, which had been buried under twenty feet of silt, and performed a feat not less to his credit in opening out an area as large as the floor-space of a great cathedral. But when he left the site in 1874, he had manifestly not found all that remained of the most famous of ancient temples; nor of what he did indeed find would he ever compose a sufficient record. For thirty years doubts remained which the first Museum in the world, owner of the site, could not well refuse to resolve; and to try to resolve them I was sent to Ephesus in the last days of September 1904.

The site looked then as hopeless as an ancient site can look—an immense water-logged pit choked with a tangled brake of thorns and reeds; and

when axe and billhook and fire had cleared the jungle, it looked, if possible, more hopeless still. The shallow surface waters, however, when no longer sheltered by leafy canopies, dried quickly under the early October sun, and I got to work with little delay on the platform of the temple which King Croesus helped to build. A hundred men were enrolled, and every local means of carriage was pressed into their service. I got mule-carts and horse-carts, asses with panniers and asses with sacks, barrows and close-woven country baskets to be borne by boys. A central way was cut through the hillocks of marble, and from right and left broken stuff was sent up the ramps to dumping-grounds on the plain. But we were only reopening an earlier explorer's clearance, and could hope for nothing strange or new among his leavings. Not twice in a ten-hour day did a scrap of carved or written stone, unseen or unsaved by Wood, reward our painful levering of tumbled blocks and sifting of stony soil. A common ganger with a hundred unskilled navvies could have served science as well as I.

As the polyglot labourers (half a dozen races chattered in the gangs) learned the ways of their taskmaster and became handy with their tools, the daily round grew ever more same, and each hour longer and emptier than the last. The beginning of an ambitious excavation is inspirited by an interest independent of results achieved or hoped. There are the local nature of the soil and the local

peculiarities of the ancient remains to be learned ; you have new and unhandy human instruments to temper, sharpen, and set ; confidence must be gained and community of hope engendered. The days will go briskly for a week, two weeks, three weeks, according to the difficulties to be overcome. Then, if the instinct of the gamester be your mainstay in the digging trade, you will begin to crave winnings or, at least, the fair chance of them. Should there be some well-guarded kernel of the site, some presumed lode of antiquarian ore, you will endure, performing hopefully the monotonous tasks of the digger's duty, while pick and shovel and knife are cutting onwards or downwards towards the hidden treasure ; and if you can make your men comprehend and share your hope, the work will go forward well enough, with a fillip now and again from trifling loot found by the way. But if hope is deferred overlong—yet more if you have never held it confidently or never held it at all—your lot will insensibly become one of the dreariest that can fall to man. The germ of your hopelessness, infecting your labourers, will be developed more virulently in them. Their toil will lack life, and their tasks be scamped and vamped ; their eyes will see not nor their hands spare the evanescent relics of the past, while the tired voices of the taskmasters rise and fall over listless labour.

Many excavations that I have seen—most indeed—go forward thus for a longer or a shorter time ; and, since sometimes they cannot go forward other-

wise, I have almost envied that sort of scientific excavator, generally Teuton, who seems to feel little or nothing of the gamester's goad, and plods on content to all appearance with his maps or his plans or his notes or nothing in particular, that might not be done better in his German study; while his labourers, clearing monuments that could not be missed in the dark by the worst trained observer in the world, shovel earth and stones mechanically day in and day out for months together, and send them down a tramway under an overseer's eye. I say I have almost envied his content; but I have always remembered in time that, in digging, you only find if you care to find, and according to the measure of your caring, or, as a famous and fortunate explorer once put it, you find what you go out to find; and reckoning the momentary joy of success against the slow sorrow of failure, I have rated the quality of the first worth so immeasurably more than the quantity of the last, that I have been consoled. If lack of luck vexes the gamester's soul, it is to him that the rare prizes of hazard most often fall.

October passed thus, and November was on the wane; but no prize had appeared to lighten our weary days. Already we had pierced the platform at several points to meet with nothing better below it than sand and water. What, in reason, was to be hoped above it, where diggers from Justinian's day to Wood's had rummaged and robbed? We cajoled despair with the most insignificant dis-

coveries—with patches of bare pavement, with scraps of Roman inscriptions chipped out of masses of Byzantine concrete, with a few sherds of Greek vases and with broken terra-cottas sifted out of the bedding of the temple-steps built in Alexander's day. In a world where the absolute is never attained, the relative, thank heaven! can always please, and Nature, of her pity, with a little of your contributory goodwill, will blind you to relativity.

No other antiquarian work could be done elsewhere to fill the days. The rest of the site of Ephesus, city, suburbs, and district, had been conceded to an Austrian Mission which was even then present in full force, exploring the great market-place and its southern approach, as well as the famous double Church of Mary Mother of God. Its distinguished leaders, greatly though they had desired the Artemisium site for their own, treated me from the first with all sympathy and courtesy, and the least return I could make was to respect all their wide preserves. Now and then I visited their work, which was proceeding almost as uneventfully as my own, and now and then rode aimless rounds over the Cayster plain and the dusty hills. Rarely I received visitors who were politely contemptuous of my sodden pit, and every day I watched the slow fall of the leaf in the fig orchards of Ayassolúk.

The last days of November came. The platform of Wood's 'earliest temple' was almost clear, and several shafts had been sunk fruitlessly through its

massive foundations. To go on with such work in a second season would be to waste time and money, and it seemed best to make an end in one campaign by keeping the men through December into January. The gang, which was clearing the central sanctuary, had reached its midway point and begun to lay open the meagre remains of a small oblong structure, which Wood had named the 'Great Altar', and left undisturbed. I noted that it had only an outer skin of marble, and was filled in solid with small limestone slabs. So far we had sunk no pits through the pavement of the sanctuary itself, though many in the peristyle; and how better might we probe than in the heart of this 'Altar', where no massive foundations would have to be broken through? Moreover, we might hope to learn whether the structure were indeed a 'Great Altar' or not rather the pedestal of the divine image which was set up in the Holy of Holies.

The topmost slabs were lifted easily out of their beds; not less easily those of a second layer. Gazing dully at their prints on the mud-mortar I noticed some bright specks, and stooping, picked out two or three. They were flakes of leaf-gold, fallen from some gilded object which had perished, whatever it was. No sooner was the first slab of a third layer raised than something better than a flake of foil shone on its bed, namely a little plate of impure gold, stamped with a geometric Ionian pattern, and pierced at the corners. I thought of the goddess who, probably, had stood in effigy on

this pedestal, of her plated diadem and gold-encrusted robe, and sent for sieves.

During the rest of that day hours passed as minutes. Every handful of mud mortar washed through the meshes left treasure behind, women's gauds for the most part—ear-rings of all patterns and weights, beads of sundered necklace-strings, pins for the hair, and brooches for the shoulder or throat, some of these last fashioned after the likeness of hawks in the finest granular work of Ionian smiths. With them appeared primitive electrum coins, fresh from the mint. I was as puzzled as pleased. How had delicate jewels come to lurk there, fresh and unspoiled? When the first specimens appeared, I thought them accidents of ruin—precious trappings of the statue carried down by water through chinks of its pedestal, or, perhaps, contents of some perished casket. But such possibilities became impossible as the jewels continued to be found in each successive bed of mortar. Evidently we had chanced on some sort of foundation deposit—on objects hidden with a purpose when the first builders were laying course on course of the pedestal—and that we had the most desired of treasures, fine work of the Ionian springtime of Greece. Perhaps also we had solved at last the mystery of Greek foundation-deposits. Under Egyptian temples Petrie has found many such deposits, whether beneath corner stones, or the main threshold, or in the central axis of a building; but under Greek shrines the hiding place of foundation records

had never been divined. Yet what spot more fitting than the pedestal of the statue at the very heart of the sacred plan ?

We had dug out only a small part of our vein of treasure when dark came down with a rising gale, whose fierce squalls brought up the long expected rains. On and off, at some hour of every day and night, it would rain for a week and more, sometimes with lightning and cyclonic winds, sometimes in sodden calm. The storms which had begun in unnatural warmth continued, after the third day, in cruel cold, which coated the pools with ice, and froze the very marrow of the men who had to grope for jewels waist-deep in water and slime ; but we dared not pause for even a day. The fame of our find had gone abroad, and others would have dredged had we desisted. The blue fingers of the men cracked and swelled with washing sharp shingle in the sieves till they could hardly pick out jewels, and I knew what it was to be wet through and chilled through for a week on end.

During a momentary brightening of the sky we sank pits outside the pedestal, and there too found foundations of walls earlier than our predecessors had found, and fragments of fine Ionian things lying among them. Then down again came the deluge to flood the pits. For eight days we fought the weather, replacing the worn-out and sick with eager volunteers. Each morning the water had risen above its morning level of the day before, and at last it began to well up faster than we could bale.

The rains of winter had come in earnest, and we must await spring. The hole which we had made in the pedestal was choked again with blocks too heavy for furtive marauders to drag out, so long as water lay deep around ; and before the middle of December I had gone to Constantinople carrying more than half a thousand jewels. Whatsoever of the goddess's treasure might still lie buried was left to the keeping of watchmen and the flood.

The waters guarded their trust. That winter is still remembered in Anatolia for its rains and the fevers which followed. When I returned to the site near the end of March, I looked out over a lake below whose unruffled surface the pedestal lay drowned too deep for any one but a diver to rob its core. Its upper stones, said the Ephesians, would not emerge till late summer. What was to be done ? Except by the help of a very powerful steam pump, the water could not be drained out of a great hollow, many feet below the general level of the plain and hardly higher than the surface of the distant sea. I left a contractor to clear away the upper part of Wood's great rubbish heaps, which still blocked the two ends of the site, and went back to Smyrna.

To make a long story short, an engine and pump were lent by the Ottoman Railway Company and three weeks later dragged to the edge of our pit ; and after we had cut a passage seaward for the strong stream which its twelve-inch pipe would disgorge, it was set to work to lower the lake. But

we were only at the beginning of difficulties. The free water was sucked up in a few hours ; but the drainage of the lower levels, which was dammed by deep and massive foundation walls, could not be collected fast enough to keep the great pipe free of air, and clear of mud. If the engine stopped, the water ceased to flow towards it, and in the lapse of a night the pond would rise nearly as high again as at the first. In the end we had no choice but to spend many days in cutting a network of channels through the foundations and in deepening the pool below the pipe by hauling out great rubble blocks which had been bedded down by the builders of the latest temple. The men, who had to wade to their middles under a hot sun, fell sick of fevers, and I myself began to feel none too well. On the last day of April I took to my bed, and after fighting my malady for a week, went down to Smyrna in high fever and was put to bed in the Seamen's Hospital for other ten days. Thus it was not till May was half gone that, with drainage channels dug, the central area of the temple fenced against inflow, and a second and smaller pump rigged over the treasure-spot, we could hunt again for jewels.

They appeared one after another in the sieves just as they had done five months before ; and when the clean bottom sand had been scraped out of the four corners of the pedestal, we had added nearly five hundred trinkets. But now I found that I cared for none of these things. The fever had left me unstrung, and I longed for nothing but the

moment when I might scrape Diana's mud off my feet for the last time. Every evening I hoped against hope that the lode would be exhausted next day. I have never struck such a vein of luck, and never liked luck less. The site, it must be allowed, was no place for a hardly convalescent man. The end of May approached. Each noon the sun beat more fiercely into our windless hollow, and the flood, which was sucked out by the great pump each morning, left tracts of slowly drying slime and stranded water-beasts withering and stinking among rotten weeds. One could not watch the workmen without wading and mud-larking and groping in that fetid ooze. Every page of my diary breathes utter disgust of it and yearning for a cleaner, sweeter life. For all I cared, Science and Duty might go to the wall; and thither I had sent them and myself as well but for shame of old Gregóri and his cold, unsleeping eye. He had dug a dozen sites with me, and never yet stopped short of the bottom or refused to follow a likely lead. Was I going to tempt him now?

I did not. I held out, even to the dog days. Before the pedestal was exhausted we had begun to probe the mud about it, and there find ruins of three small shrines, one below the other, and in the slimy bottom of the lowest and earliest many precious broken things. These were rarely jewels and articles of personal wear like those that made up the Pedestal Treasure, but chiefly things used in worship, and fragments of votive offerings. They

had not been hidden of set purpose where we found them, but were lost and forgotten things, sucked into the bottom ooze, or trodden under foot in some wild hour of ruin or sack. Since the earliest shrine on the site must be supposed founded not later than 700 B.C., it may well be that we dredged from its nether slime treasures unseen since the sanctuary was violated by the rude Cimmerian horde in the reign of Ardys of Lydia. That these objects belonged to much the same period as the Pedestal Treasure, the artistic character of many bore witness; that, like that Treasure, they were of earlier date than the second of the three primitive shrines was proved by our finding certain of them bedded under its surviving foundations. In one case only did we seem to light on anything buried with intention. This was a little jar, set upright in an angle of the lowest foundations and once sealed with a covering, whose binding-cord still clung to the clay. My men were no longer in their first innocence, and dealers in contraband waited at noon and night to tempt them. He who first sighted this jar, as he was scraping slime into his basket, looked stealthily about him; but I was at his back, poor fellow, ready to lift his prize myself, and I still see his sad eyes as nineteen electrum coins of the earliest mintage of Lydia fell out of his pot.

We got statuettes, whole or broken, by the score, whether in ivory—priceless treasures of early Ionian art—or in bronze, or in terra-cotta, or even in

wood. We got vessels of ivory and vessels of clay. We got much gold and electrum, which had been used for casing or adorning things decayed ; we got some silver, of which, best prize of all, was a plate engraved on both faces, in the oldest Ionic character, with a record of contributions towards a rebuilding of the shrine. We got many another object, broken or imperfect, but not less precious, of crystal and paste and amber and bronze. In sum, when all the ground had been searched, we had recovered from the treasures of the first House of Artemis in the Ephesian plain hard on three thousand objects, one with another and greater with less. I took them all to Constantinople, as in honour bound—for we had subscribed to the Ottoman Law and made no bargain with the Turk ; and in return for our good faith, all the objects were suffered to go for a season to England to be ordered and studied. I wanted nothing less than to see them again when I left Stambul, and nothing more than to keep them for ever in London, when, a year later, they had to be returned.

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My other excavation was of that body-snatching sort, which Science approves and will doubtless justify to the Angel of the Resurrection by pleading a statute of limitations. To rob a tomb appears, in fact, to be held dastardly or laudable according as the tenancy of the corpse has been long or short. I once explored a Graeco-Roman cemetery near Alexandria with as willing a Moslem gang as heart

could desire. But one of my men ate apart from his companions and had no fellowship with them. He was by far the best digger of them all ; none so light of hand as he, so deft to extricate fragile objects from one grave, and to find his way into another. I foresaw a useful *reis*, and said so to my chief overseer. He listened in silence, and at evening asked leave to speak. The rest, he said, would leave me sooner than take orders from this man. He was a good tomb-digger ; but where had he learned his trade ? In the modern cemeteries of the town. He stole grave-clothes. I did not make him a *reis*, but paid him off next day—why or with what right I hardly know.

I was bidden to search the tombs in part of the hill behind Assiut, whose soft calcareous cliffs are honeycombed with graves of every age. This vast cemetery, lying near a large town, has been ransacked over and over again, chiefly for wooden statuettes and models, which seem to have been carved at the Wolf Town more often and more cleverly than anywhere else in old Egypt. I was warned to expect no untouched burial, but to content myself with raking the leavings of hastier robbers ; but the event belied that warning. First and last we had the fortune to find nearly thirty sealed graves, many poor enough, and some re-used for second and humble burials, but also a few of the Old Empire period, whose furniture adorns even the rich collections in Bloomsbury. But it was with all the pain in the world, amid recurring failures

and after weeks of fruitless toil, that we found those. For every profitable tomb at least twenty profitless had to be opened and, moreover, examined scrupulously, since it was hardly ever possible to be sure that the dead man had been wholly robbed till we reached his chamber itself, ten to thirty feet below the surface. The deep shaft of entry would often look as the masons had left it in the distant days of the Twelfth Dynasty, filled to its brim with their clean limestone chips ; but none the less the coffins would be found smashed or removed, the best of the furniture withdrawn, and the rest heaped pell-mell in utter ruin, the chamber having been entered from below by a passage rudely hewn from a neighbour grot. Yet even then it could not be abandoned unsearched ; and for other and many days the men must turn over the piles of earth and bones and scraps in faint hope that something of value had been overlooked or despised by earlier robbers. Doing this slow, blind work, they had to be watched by the dim light of smoky candles in the choking dust-laden air of a narrow cell, reeking of mummy clothes and the foul rags of *fellahin*. Had I been an annual digger in Egypt, able to call a trained and trusted crew to Siut, and had the scene not lain so near a large town notorious for its illicit traffic in antiques, that penance might have been avoided. Even in performing it one was robbed. Dealers waited for my men at sunset below the hill and beset them all the way to the town ; and one digger, a youth of brighter wit and face

than most—he was half a Bedawi—gained so much in the few weeks before I turned him off that he bought him a camel, a donkey and a wife. The order of his purchases was always stated thus, whoever told the tale.

The most bitter disappointment was caused by a great collapsed grotto through whose choked portal we had quarried our way to find the central grave-pit still covered with its roof of ancient palm-trunks. We lifted these and dug into the clean chips below with ever brighter hopes; for the shaft was so virgin that white dust left by the original chiselling hung still on its walls. Down and down the men delved, keen as their masters, and for five-and-twenty feet into the depths of the hill the filling was pure of all sign of disturbance. Then at last the chamber appeared, doorless, pure and empty as the shaft. That tomb had never been used for burial at all.

Thus success seemed to flee before us, and to pursue it was dangerous, where rock was rotten and screes of loose chips, thrown out from plundered tombs above, might slip at any moment over the only channels of air and escape, and condemn us to the death of trapped rats in a most unworthy cause and most unpleasant company. Crawling on all fours in the dark, one often found the passage barred by a heap of dim swaddled mummies turned out of their coffins by some earlier snatcher of bodies; and over these one had to go, feeling their breast-bones crack under one's knees and

their swathed heads shift horribly this way or that under one's hands, and having found nothing to loot in the thrice plundered charnel-house, must crawl back by the same grisly path to the sunlight, choked with mummy dust and redolent of more rotten grave-clothes than the balms of Arabia could sweeten. Partner of the scented dinner-table, is that the trade you desire ?

And how would our evening hours have seemed to you ? They were spent in a huge grotto with storied walls, because the lower Nile valley is a thoroughfare of furious winds all the winter long, and tent life, a constant misery in Egypt, would have been most miserable on the face of the Siut bluff, which stands out into the winds' track, and is buffeted by all their storms. Not that our wide-mouthed grotto proved much better than a tent. The north wind struck its farther wall, and was sucked round the other two walls in unceasing, unsparing draught which dropped dust by the way on everything we ate or drank or kept. Warmth after the day's toil we never felt from December to February, even when sitting closest to the fire which we kindled nightly with unpainted slats of ancient coffins on a hearth of Old Empire bricks. The dead wood, seasoned by four thousand years of drought, threw off an ancient and corpse-like smell, which left its faint savour on the toast which we scorched at the embers ; and a clear smokeless light fell fitfully on serried coffins, each hiding a gaunt tenant swathed and bound, to whose quiet presence

we grew so little sensitive that we ranged our stores and bottles, our pans and our spare garments on his convenient lid.

None the less, every time that I watched the clearance of a sealed tomb-door—I will avow it, dear lady, even if after all I wake your desire to dig—I used to put all these ills, the disappointments and discomforts of the work and life, to the account of things that matter not at all. I have dug for twenty years and set first foot after the sexton's in very many ancient sepulchres; but I still feel, as at first, the flutter of poignant hope that the tomb may be virgin, and an indescribable thrill at the sight of grave furniture undisturbed since thousands of years. There lie the dead man's bow and arrows in their place on his coffin-lid, string snapped and plumes in dust, and there his stout staff and his boomerang; the little Nile boats fully manned are propped by his side; the wooden servants who answer his call in the underworld are at their several businesses, and his effigy, with his wife's, stands at his head. I know well that, in Egypt at least, one hardly ever opens a perfectly virgin sepulchre. Some one robbed it on the night of the burial ere the door was sealed. Some malign intruder has rumpled the grave clothes down to the waist in quest of jewels on neck and breast, and has trampled or overturned in his guilty haste the furniture beside the coffin. But since he withdrew with his accomplices and sealed the door, all has been silence and fine rain of dust

from the roof, until, after four thousand years, *you* come. You may talk of science and think of loot, while the chattering diggers are working like fiends to lift the last of the filling from the shaft ; but the first look into the dimness of the sepulchre itself will silence them, hardened robbers though they be, and will silence you. Science and your own glory and the lust of loot are all forgotten in the awe which falls in fairy tales on adventurers into underground chambers where kings of old time sit asleep. Yet next day, or maybe the day after, when that coffin has been packed with twenty others in the magazine, you will play cards of an evening on its head, if it happens to be handy.

Not too nice a trade, you see, dear lady. Best let it be.

CHAPTER XII

THE SAJUR

IN the Syrian March of 1908 it rained when it did not snow, and wet or fair it blew a gale. We had come in a deluge to Aleppo, wallowed in mud at Mumbij, found Euphrates swinging in full flood round his mighty curves, crossed him before a wet gale, recrossed and ridden all the way to Aintab head down to the same laden blast. Then, during four miserable days, sleet and snow, rain and hail had spent themselves in turn on that highland town. But on the fifth morning the sky was clear. The tracks had hardened in one fair night, and bush and tree were eager for spring. When we wheeled on the crest of a low pass for a last look into the sunlit valley, a far-away frame of dazzling peaks had risen where clouds were hanging yesterday. Life was sweet once more, and the world seemed good.

The hope of hunters beckoned us ahead. A fortnight before, while we lay in camp by Carchemish, a friendly Syrian had promised two things, first, 'black written stones' near a village two hours to the north; second, 'writing like nails', to be seen on the farther bank of Euphrates over against the outfall of the Sajur. The first promise had been fulfilled, and the Hittite stones of Kellekli stood to our credit. The second promise we were now on our way to prove. A mound called Tell Ahmar

was marked on our maps opposite the mouth of the Sajur, and there we hoped to find the Syrian's 'nails', which could hardly mean other than the wedge-shaped characters of the Assyrians. Cuneiform records would be worth finding on the frontier of Hatti land.

Moreover, there might be other quarry on the road. On the first night we should camp under Tell Bashar, known to historians of the Crusades as a great mound by the Sajur, whither the Frank lords of Edessa betook themselves when driven back across Euphrates. When, fifteen years before, I passed through Aintab for the first time, I had found in its *bazars* and *khans* sundry Hittite seals and trinkets, which were said by their vendors to have been found, one and all, on that same *Tell*. I doubted their story then, knowing how natives will combine to say that small antiquities come from the most notable ruin in their district, whatever its age; but with wider knowledge of Syria I began to believe. Few or no mounds, so large as this was reported to be, have ever been built up from the level by Franks. Rather as at Aleppo and Hamah and a score of other places the Crusaders, like the Moslems before and after them, set their towers on old mounds of the Hittites. It would be worth while to spend a night at least in some hamlet near the *Tell*, and enquire diligently if such trinkets had indeed been found there by husbandmen and shepherds, or were hanging yet on the neck-strings of their wives.

I had met with no record of any antiquary's visit to Tell Bashar, and the place was reported to us in Birejik and Aintab to be a spot where a stranger would not be well received. The nearest village was a home of outlaws with whom the Pasha meant to deal faithfully, *bukra*, to-morrow, or may be next day, or may be next year. But since the outlaw in Turkey is more often friend than foe to wandering sahibs who some day may make his peace for him, we rode on. Many laden camels were in the road—we were still on the bridle path which leads to Aleppo—and their drivers greeted us in friendly fashion, as glad as we of the unaccustomed sunlight and new-washed air ; but each man carried his ready gun. Presently our way parted from the main track, and bore south by east over a deep hill-girt plain to the banks of a little canal, unwonted sight in Turkey of Asia. Here at least men lived who took thought for the morrow, and in a land of ancient violence, held something better than to rob and kill. We sighted a few women, bent over the wet earth in the daily quest for liquorice root, but no near villages ; and when we halted at noon by a double spring, no one came near us except two curious herd-boys. The traveller in Turkey, who must eat most of his bread at noon and night amid the odours of villages and under the unflinching regard of scornful eyes, remembers with blessing his rare meals by wayside fountains. There he has no questions to answer and none to ask. The sunshine is his, and his the best of the shade.

Lolling at his western ease, with no eastern punctilio to bear in mind, he forgets for a moment those twin spoilsports of the Levant, suspicion and bakshish.

We had remounted and ridden forward for less than an hour, when the low eastern range ran out into a second plain and a great mound sprang out of the flats ahead. Needless to ask if it were Tell Bashar. Longer, broader, and higher than the acropolis of Carchemish, it had the same abrupt flat-topped form, and even at our distance could be seen to rise between the horns of a low crescent of mounds, which kept the line of some city's buried wall. We rode over the Sajur by the high-pitched bridge of Sarambol which for centuries has carried the mule-track from Aleppo to Birejik, and, having cut across an elbow of the meandering stream, we recrossed to the village of Bashar, and chose a camping ground on sodden grass beyond its huts. The sheikh called us to his upper chamber, and we took coffee amid a gathering throng of peasants who seemed willing enough to further our desires, but could muster only a defaced coin or two after a two-hour sitting, and told us nothing of Hittite seals. Our hopes sank low. But the evening and the morning, when shepherds and women are home from the fields, often bring forth what the afternoon knew not; and we thought it well to leave the village to talk us over, while we went on to the site.

Huge the *Tell* loomed near at hand, as we rode through a green gap in the outer crescent of mounds, and the climb to its flat summit proved very steep.

All that was to be seen thereon was work of the Franks—foundation lines of their halls and ramparts, choked cisterns of their making, and two fragments of towers that had kept their main entrance on the south side—with nothing of an earlier day unless it were certain black blocks of basalt, worked here and there into their masonry. From this height the outer mounds could be seen to enclose west, south, and east a site larger than Carchemish, but ploughed from end to end, and cleared of all stones, modern or ancient. On the north the ground falls steeply from the foot of the mound and stretches flat a hundred yards to the Sajur, whose sinuous reaches gleamed in the sinking sunlight. The river passes Tell Bashar in loops and counter-loops, fetching a wide compass to the east before finding its southward way again; and probably it has shifted its course often in that soft, stoneless plain. The little fall of the land at the northern foot of Tell Bashar, therefore, may well be a forgotten bank, and the mound may have risen, like other early fortresses, from the water's very edge.

It was an hour after sunset when the first-fruits of the harvest that we sought appeared at our tent-door. They were two seals of steatite, gable-shaped and engraved, which had been strung on a woman's necklace in the company of modern charms to avert the 'eye'. No price was asked, but what we chose to give. We paid well, and had not time to finish supper before spoil of the Hittites—their cylinders, their beads, their seals, gable-shaped.

conical, scarabaeoid—flowed in from all sides, and the source of the Aintab objects was put beyond all doubt. So thick became the throng of vendors at last that the sheikh, attended by armed satellites, came up to close the market. He was nervous, and begged we would not sleep. His village, he protested, was bad, and some months before had fought a pitched battle for its lands, and killed some Aintablis. The Pasha's police had come to arrest the slayers, but had been driven off; and the ringleaders, yet at large, had nothing to lose by an attack on our camp. He, the sheikh, would suffer if a hair of our heads was touched. We promised to be wary, and he went off, leaving his guards by the tents.

The night was bitterly cold. The north wind, which had cheered our morning hours, did not die at sunset as is its wont, but blew on through the dark in token that the weather was not yet firm, and the sodden grass grew crisp under its breath. It was too chill for stripping, and almost too chill for sleep, and had robbers come at any hour of that night they would have found one or the other of us awake. But they came not, and I doubt if any had ever a mind to come. The peasants showed us, first and last, as good hospitality as their poverty allowed, offering again and again their little cups of bitter coffee half filled in the Arab fashion, and at sunrise they came once more to the tents asking no higher prices than overnight. Collecting was too easy a business there to be a sport at all; but

the bag consoled us. When we rode off to the south we had gathered in nearly sixty Hittite things. Few women in that little village had not hung a cylinder or a seal on their necklaces to win ease in childbed, and make the milk sweet in their breasts, and I trust they have found others of equal virtue to replace those for which two Franks were so ready to pay silver.

Records of Shalmaneser II mention a notable fenced place, situated on the river *Sagura* and taken once and again by the Great King on his forays across Euphrates. He names it, in his long-winded Ninevite way, Ashur-utir-asbat; but, he says, 'the Hatti call it Pitru'. By the latter name the Pharaohs of the Eighteenth Dynasty also knew a strong city of northern Syria, which lay on their way to Carchemish. The site of Pitru on the Sagura has never been fixed; but no one before us with Pitru in his mind had seen Tell Bashar, which is by far the largest ancient site on the Sajur. If Til-Barsip, where Shalmaneser crossed Euphrates, was indeed at modern Birejik, as some Assyriologists believe, it should be observed that Tell Bashar lies on the straightest road from this point to Halman, or Aleppo, whither the King marched from Pitru in the year before Christ, 854. That diggers will prove some day that Pitru and Bashar are one, I make small doubt; but I feel less sure that, as some of those who study the geography of the old Hebrew world think, Pitru was also the same town as that Pethor 'in Aram in the mountains of the

east', whence Balak the Moabite called Balaam to curse Israel. Pethor is said elsewhere to have been of Aram Naharaim, or Mesopotamia; but the Hebrew scribes were not scientific geographers, and I will leave to the Higher Critics another dark saying of theirs concerning Pethor, that it was 'by the river of the land of the children of Balak's people'. Nevertheless, if ever there be a plan afoot to dig Tell Bashar, one might reasonably enough invoke the name of the son of Beor to open purses which are usually closed to diggers unashamed to beg.

Our second day by the Sajur passed cloudless as the first, and the land still kept the festival of yesterday. The ride over those treeless rolling downs would be dreary enough in mirky weather; but on this day the shallow dales rejoiced in the sun, the brooks laughed as we forded them, the sheep flecked emerald slopes, and wherever there was tilth, the young wheat showed an even brighter green. So crystal clear was the air that the freshly powdered peaks of Amánus stood up boldly in the west as though they were ten, instead of sixty miles away; and from every higher swell of the downs we got a backward view to yet more distant snows on Taurus. The very pack-horses, sorry jades that they were, felt the spur of spring: they hinnied, squealed, headed off the track to gallantry and combat, till at last they broke into a frenzy of kicking and galloping which brought their packs about their heels and their panting drivers' fists about their heads. A pack-horse, who fancies himself Pegasus, is the

most laughable beast on earth till he begins to scatter your bedding, your instruments, your garments and your food over a mile of rock or bog.

Low bluffs of basalt ran for a long distance on our left, in which quarries of the Hittites will be found some day. Tooled blocks of their black stone were scattered over both a small mound passed on the way, and a much larger acropolis which we spied at noon in the trough of a tributary valley. Tell Khalid is the second site on the Sajur for size, and must survive from some town known to Assyrian history. In a hamlet on the farther bank of the stream, which was reached by plunging through almost too swollen a flood, we were bidden rest and eat by the Bey, a friendly Mussulman, rich in beautiful brood mares, which were browsing unshackled with their young on lawn-like pastures; and during our short stay, the peasants had time to bethink them of three or four trifles picked up at one time or another on their mound—of a scarabæus in paste, two engraved seals, some haematite beads, and, more welcome than these, a terra-cotta figurine of the Goddess of Syria, pressing her breasts in the manner of Ishtar.

Well pleased we rode on in the early afternoon to the bridge of the Sajur at Akjé, where rumour had it that we might lodge in a *khan*. But the *khan* proved ruinous, like the bridge, and emptied of all but dung and fleas, since the waggons bound from Aleppo to Mesopotamia have ceased to pass this way; and we had no choice but to keep on, parted by the

stream from a chain of villages on the left bank, each built on or by an ancient mound. After an hour and a half we reached a spot marked on the maps a hamlet, Kubbeh, but in reality a large farmstead with attendant hovels and a water-mill, owned by a wealthy Aleppine who lives away till the summer-time. His bailiff, a grave, black-bearded man, bade us welcome with respectful eyes, and abased himself even to draw off our shoes. We lay comfortably in the Bey's chamber, and on the morrow went our way his debtors. The old feudal families may be extinct or reduced to shadows in Turkey; but the spirit of feudal dependence is as strong as ever in the country folk. Instinctively the peasants gather about a rich man's dwelling, be he only a tax-farmer—as indeed were most of the 'Deré Beys'; and they would rather be his vassals than small proprietors on their own lands. Traditions of ancient lawlessness and present fear of strong men, armed by the law, do something to keep this habit alive; but its roots lie deeper—deep down in that immemorial respect of persons which goes in the East with a fixed belief that they are respected also by the Most High.

The third morning broke grey, with a chill wind off the Mesopotamian desert and a threat of rain; but the weather held fair till we halted in the village of Dadat at noon. We had kept to the more mountainous right bank, though, for more than one long stretch, we found no beaten way. Most villages, to-day as yesterday, were seen on the

farther side, and it would have been easier to have crossed the stream and journeyed on their linking paths. But the map showed an earlier traveller's track on the left bank, while it left the right blank both of roads and villages (although we lighted on two as considerable as the largest of those opposite), and it seemed better to strike out a new route. The river kept us company, tumbling down a long and gently inclined ladder of rock, with short reaches of stiller water, in which herons waded, careless of our passing by ; but beyond Dadat we saw it bear away to north, hugging the hills, and were warned that sheer bluffs would bar any farther riding by its bank.

It had begun to rain when we struck off over the downs, in hope to reach shelter at the village of Chat ere the storm should become heavy. Two Turkman camps lay on our way, and the elders of the tents, when persuaded we were no robbers, gave us guidance through a maze of tortuous sheep-tracks. Cold looked the black booths flapping in the searching easter, colder the rolling treeless down on which the wanderers' lives were led, coldest the scudding wrack in the sky. The joy of yesterday had forsaken the world, and we hailed the hovels of Chat as a sailor hails a port. But Chat did not hail us. We were many men and more horses, and the best shelter was already over-full of wives and children and cattle, among whom not very willingly a narrow space was cleared for us. While he burned an armful of thorns in the chimney, the Headman

pointed to the thinning clouds, and protested that another village lay just beyond the hill.

Ready to be persuaded, we went farther to fare worse. Once on the downs again we met the full fury of the soaking, freezing gale. There was no pretence of a path, and the dusty hillsides were already become bog and slime. A horse slid, plunged, and broke his girths; then another and another; and the dusk came down so fast that only the very last of the light served us into Avshariyeh, as mean a knot of cabins as one may see even in Syria. The one guest-house was packed with travellers, Circassian, Arab and Turk, who had been ferried over Euphrates in the afternoon; and no man had so much as an empty stable to offer. It was idle, however, to plead that there would be better lodging in some farther village, for, less than a mile ahead, the Great River barred our way in the night; and there was but one course open—boldly to enter the sheikh's dwelling and occupy till he came, in the sacred name of hospitality, and the more potent name of the Frank. It was a large stone-built barn, three parts stable, with a small living space raised and railed, which we took for ourselves without more ado. The women and children scurried into the dark of the stable end; their old lord followed us, and accepting the inevitable, began forthwith, Arabwise, to revolve in his slow mind how the chance might be turned to profit. He too, it appeared, was a stranger in the land, going in fear of the Circassian farmers on the royal estate of

Mumbij, and he had a likely son. Here were *Ingliz* by his hearth, *Ingliz* who, their escort said, stood very near to the great Consul in Aleppo. If they spoke for his boy, would he not be made *kavass*, and, by the custom of generations, a rock of defence for all his kin in evil-doing as in well ?

The old man said nothing of this till the morning ; but, as his purpose grew, he waxed more kind, sending one for firewood and another for milk, and a third to find lodging for our beasts. The air was pungent with wood-smoke, and so laden with the ammoniac reek of the Augean stable, that the fumes from the drying garments of a dozen unwashed men could scarcely offend. A sudden blaze from a fresh tuft of waxy thorn would light up the depths of the lower barn, and show us for a moment our room-mates, a steaming throng of buffaloes, oxen, sheep and goats ; but it was not till we wished to sleep in the small hours that we began to hear the intermittent ruckling of a camel. In the dawn there he loomed, nearest of all the menagerie, chawing and blowing forth his froth. Poor prisoned beast ! We looked at the single low door. Nothing of stature within many inches of his could pass that way. How had he got in, and how could he go out ? The old sheikh threw no light on a problem which he seemed unable to appreciate, and we were left to suppose that his camel had led a cloistered existence ever since he was found, on some fine morning, to have grown in the night the little more that would mean so much.

The morning broke fair, if not fine. Our host, who had opened his heart at last, took shadowy promises and solid silver with equal zest, and sent his blessing with us as we rode towards a white bluff honeycombed with ancient tombs, beyond whose butt a great water gleamed. Three or four mounds broke the eastern line of horizon, of which the nearest, rising from the river's edge, was that Tell Ahmar, where we were to seek the 'writing like nails'.

Euphrates is not passed, however, in one hour or in two. For all our shouting and firing of guns the two ferry-boats lay till almost noonday motionless specks under the farther bank, and we had ample time to gaze at the promised land from far. Gradually a little company formed about us, made up in part of Aleppine passengers, who had come down in two waggons to the ferry, in part of roamers from the neighbouring hills, who spied unfamiliar tents. A swarthy Bedawi sauntered up, seated himself, saluted and said, 'I have nothing. With two hundred piastres I shall buy cattle.' 'God give you!' I remarked; 'why say you so to me?' 'You have them, and I have not,' he replied simply. He gave place to the strange figure of a very old man, almost blind, who wore a silken coat of polychrome patchwork and a green turban, and had the delicate face and soft beard that one often sees among dervishes. The company murmured that he was mad, but received him reverently, and one who was sick bowed while the thin lips muttered a prayer or charm over his head. This patriarch,

also, wanted piastres. Allah had shown him in sleep the hiding-place of a great treasure, and for a little money the rich *pashas* might share his secret. Two days later we passed him digging beside a great boulder a mile down stream, but we had bought no right to the gold that he sought.

At last we descried twin high-pooed arks crawling upstream under the farther bank, each towed by a dozen straining men. In an hour they would cast off, and by grace of bare poles, unwieldy rudders, currents and eddies, cunningly used, hit our point on the shore or miss it by a hundred yards, by a quarter of a mile, by more or by less, as Allah should will. Eight times I have crossed Euphrates in flood, and eight times failed to see earthly cause why the ferry-boat should ever attain the farther shore. Once cast off, I have lost all sense of headway, and seemed to slide down a boiling race, which has the boat at its mercy, keeping pace at its sides ; and thus I have drifted into mid-stream. Then suddenly there is great shouting and working of the huge tiller to and fro, and behold the shore itself, rushing to the rescue, crashes on the keel while the boat heels over with a groan. When I find my feet again in the swaying bilge, I perceive, amazed, that I have crossed Euphrates.

We landed at the foot of the *tell* itself, and climbed it forthwith. Its flat top proved small and bare of ancient stones ; but a few basalt blocks lay pell-mell at the bottom of a deep cut in its flank. On the plain below a faintly outlined horseshoe of

walls could be descried, whose horns touched the river some distance to west and east of the *tell*. Within the western horn lay a few straggling huts, among which we entered that of the ferry-master, to eat bread and learn what we might. But for a long while we learned nothing. Those who sat gravely round the low divan were, in the main, wayfarers like ourselves, come to take the ferry to-night or to-morrow; and the two or three natives, who came and went in the house, professed ignorance of all written or sculptured stones. At last I sent our Syrian servant outside to talk, for it was plain the peasants would not know what we wanted till they knew who we were. He went no farther, I believe, than the shady side of the hut, but in half an hour he re-entered with a man who would show a stone. We rose and followed scarcely twenty paces, and there, full in the open, lay a black slab, worn and polished by use as a seat or stand, but still faintly relieved by two sculptured figures shod with the peculiar Hittite boot. Bakshish changed hands; whispers passed round; and the guide remembered another stone, which he said was 'written'.

He led us north-westward out of the village, towards a gap in the long low mounds which hide the silted ruin of the city wall, and went on for a hundred yards more to the crown of a low rise. There he stayed, and, coming up with him, we saw half a dozen fragments of black basalt, which bore raised Hittite pictographs, and some part of a

sculptured scene in which figured a great gross bull. The finders had broken the stone, the guide said, but found no gold within. There used to be another fragment, but where it might be now he knew not. We saw that the well-preserved pictographs were in the fine style of Carchemish, and more in number than on any one Hittite monument yet discovered. We had not come in vain to Tell Ahmar. To get due record of the monument, however, would be the work of hours. The sun was westering, and idlers, who had followed our tracks, spoke of yet other stones, and especially of 'lions, written not thus, but otherwise—like nail-marks'. To-morrow the camp could come over, but we must see those lions to-night.

The men led us back by the corner of the hamlet, and stopped near the river bank at a heavy block, on whose upturned face were carved two winged griffins supporting the sacred palm-tree. We did what we could with camera and pencil, and then followed the guides inland across the ancient site towards a conspicuous gap in the northern wall-mounds. Through this, we were told, passed the waggon-track to Urfa, and a group of tumbled stones half seen beyond the gate raised our hopes. Nor were we to be disappointed. There lay two great winged lions of heavy Assyrian style, each inscribed with a long cuneiform text on his inner flank. The one was complete in all his parts, but broken in two; the other was in one piece, but without his head. When erect, each had stood nearly

ten feet high from claw to crest, looking up the road towards Nineveh. Probably they are work of Shalmaneser the Second, the Great King of the ninth century B.C. who crossed Euphrates from Til-Barsip to Carchemish and Pitru.

Yet another monument was shown to us that evening—a broken *stela*, representing a king or god, some nine feet high, accepting the homage of a puny adorer; and three more, beside a score of little objects, cylinders and seals, both Hittite and Assyrian, we were to see on the morrow.

We tramped a mile up stream, and under the sunset were poled across Euphrates again, prize-winners in the lottery of antiquarian discovery. For we had lighted on no mean city. Passed seventy years ago by the British navigators of the river, it had been visited by no western scholar till our lucky star led us down the Sajur. What city it was and how named, its own cuneiform inscriptions do not say. Was it Til Barsip, chief stronghold of 'Ahuni, son of Adini', which Shalmaneser renamed Kar-Shalmanasharid, and made a royal residence for himself? Or, if this be placed rightly by scholars at Birejik, was one of Ahuni's lesser cities built at Tell Ahmar? This much is sure—that in Shalmaneser's day there was a city of Mesopotamia, facing the Sajur mouth, larger in area than Carchemish, where both the Hittite and the cuneiform characters were known and used. Surely there diggers will search some day for the bilingual text which shall unlock at last the secret of the Hittite script.

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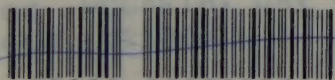
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